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Salvation by Jesus Christ *alone*

ASSERTED and VINDICATED,

AND THE

Objections made against it by some Modern Unbelievers,

Particularly by the

AUTHOR of *Christianity as Old as the Creation*,

Fully Considered and Answered:

IN

TWO SERMONS

Preached before the UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD*,

Jan. 2, and *Jan.* 6, 1731-2.

By *THO. COCKMAN*, A. M. Master of *University-College* in *Oxford*.

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TO THE

Younger STUDENTS

IN THE

Two UNIVERSITIES, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

AS *these Diſcourſes, when firſt drawn up in Private, were writ with a View of their being ſerviceable to* ſome *of you, who were expected to be the Hearers of them; ſo, now that they are made Publick, I have taken the Liberty of addreſſing them to you* all, *with a like View of their being ſerviceable to* all *ſuch, as ſhall pleaſe to read them, and conſider them with that Attention which the Weight of the Subject requires.*

You are now juſt entering, Gentlemen, upon the Journey of Publick Life, and your Happineſs and Succeſs in it, with Regard both to this and another World, will in great meaſure depend upon your ſetting out right at firſt, that is, *in the Ways of true* Virtue and Religion, *which alone can effectually bring you to an happy End of it, and render you a Bleſſing and an Honour to Yourſelves, your Families, your Country, and your Religion here, and make you everlaſtingly happy in a Life to come hereafter.*

You cannot but be ſenſible, Gentlemen, that there is at this Time a Sett of People in the World (and particularly amongſt ourſelves) who are endeavouring to turn you aſide from thoſe Ways, and lead you into the crooked ones of Vice and Irreligion; to ſerve what Ends, except the awkward Pleaſure of drawing Diſciples after them, and defending themſelves with Numbers, I confeſs I cannot imagine.

At the Head *of theſe is the Publiſher of a late Book intituled* Chriſtianity as Old as the Creation, *who with much Malice, little Senſe, and leſs good Reaſoning, has laid himſelf forth againſt all Religion, but eſpecially againſt the Chriſtian, which he is pleaſed to decry under the*

ingenious

ingenious Appellations of Enthuſiaſm, Prieſt-craft, Bigottry, Superſtition, *nay, and* a Load *and* intolerable Burden of Superſtition, *and other ſuch-like Names*, qualia vulgò jactantur a viliſſimo quoque, *as* Quintilian *expreſſes it.*

You, Gentlemen, have the Happineſs of a liberal Education, and can eaſily diſtinguiſh between Out-cry *and* Reaſoning, *between calling Ill-names like the Vulgar, and producing Arguments like an impartial Thinker: And you know the Difference between that which* accidentally *ſometimes attends a Thing, and that which* neceſſarily *ariſes from the Nature and Conſtitution of it. A Man may call the Law of* England *(if he is allowed againſt* that *the ſame Liberty as this Author has taken againſt Chriſtianity) by the like hard Names of* Cheating, Roguery, Pocket-picking, *a piece of Craft of Lawyers, which is attended with incredible Miſchiefs, and has impoveriſhed and ruined a great Number of Families; and may* tip *his Declamation too (as this Author has done) with a* tantum potuit ſuadere malorum. *But it would eaſily be anſwered,* That ſuch Complaints are for the moſt part *ill grounded and downright Falſhoods; and when there is any Truth in them, they are taken from Evils which only accidentally attend the Law; and therefore cannot with any Juſtice be charged* upon the Thing itſelf, *but only* upon the ill Uſe *which ſome fooliſhly or perverſely may have made of it: The Law may be very good, and yet in ſome Caſes it may be uſed unjuſtly.*

It will perhaps be pleaded in the Behalf of this Author, That how-much-ſoever he may have abuſed Religion, and the Chriſtian in particular, *yet* he ſpeaks very finely in Praiſe of Virtue *and the Charms and Beauties of it; and has ſet the* Law of Nature, *and the* Obligations which Men are under to obſerve its Precepts, *in a clear and perfect Light. This may be true, Gentlemen, and yet very little to the Purpoſe: The like Plea was made heretofore for his admired Fore-runner* Epicurus, *as we learn from* Tully; *to which that great Author very juſtly anſwers,* That ſo *Caius Gracchus,* at the ſame Time that he was ruining the publick Treaſury, made fine Harangues about the prudent Management of it: *But there is a wide Difference between Pretences and Realities:* Quid verba audiam *(ſays he)* cum facta videam? *I do not affirm, that the Commendations given by this Writer to Virtue and the Law of Nature, are no better than meer Pretences: But I will venture to ſay, that (like thoſe whoſe Intention it is to deceive)* verſatur in univerſalibus, *and neither tells you diſtinctly what* that Virtue *is, whoſe Charms he commends; nor what* thoſe Duties *are, which the Law of Nature requires of us, from the Conſideration of the Natures of God and Man, and from the Relation which*

Tuſc. Quæſt. Lib. iii. § 83.

we

we ſtand in to Him and to one another: Ita rem involvit, ut vix ejus mens percipiatur, *as one of the Schoolmen ſays upon a like Occaſion. I ſhould be glad to know therefore a little more* explicitly *of him,* what thoſe Duties *are which (according to his Scheme) we ought, as Creatures, to pay to the* Supreme Being; what thoſe *which are required of us from the Conſideration of* our own Nature; and what *from that Relation which we ſtand in to* one another: *And more particularly,* whether Prayers, and Praiſes, and Thankſgivings *(either publick or private) to Almighty God, as the Creator, Supporter, and Governour of the World,* &c. *be any Part of the* former; whether *egregious Fornication, and* indulging warm Deſires *in the unbridled Uſe of Women, be conſiſtent with* the Second; *and* whether *procuring a Crime, which a Man was guilty of himſelf, to be charged upon another Perſon, be agreeable to that Juſtice or that Benevolence which is required between Man and Man by* the Third. *When he ſhall think fit to come out of his Cloud, and ſhew himſelf clearly as to theſe and the like Particulars, you will be able to judge, Gentlemen, what he means by* Virtue *and the Obligations of the* Law of Nature: *But till that Time I would have you remember, that there was even in St.* Paul's *Days a Sett of Men in the World,* who ſerved not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt but their own Bellies; and yet by good Words and fair Speeches deceived the Hearts of the Simple.

His declaiming againſt the Clergy (which he does with the utmoſt Malice) is apparently intended to ſet the People againſt thoſe, who are appointed to inſtruct them in the Ways of Virtue and Religion, and thereby to promote Order and Regularity in human Society.

His Abuſes and Miſrepreſentations of the Sacred Writings *are viſibly calculated for the ſame End,* viz. *to beget in Mens Minds a contemptible Opinion of thoſe* lively Oracles, *and thereby to prevent their being ſo* profitable to them for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, *as they certainly will be, if Men receive them with that Reverence which they ought to do.*

As to his Freedom and Impartiality of thinking, *which he ſo often boaſts of, this is only an Affectation of thinking* out of the way of vulgar Underſtandings; *and an artful Inſinuation, as if thoſe who thought otherwiſe than he does, had not a* Freedom of Judgment, *but muſt be influenced by* Prejudice, *or hindered by ſome* Reſtraint. *But theſe are little Artifices, which no prudent Perſon will be deceived by: The Man that can travel ſafely, without Lett or Hindrance, in the Road that leads directly to his Journey's End, is undiſputably* free; *but if ſome People will, when there is no Occaſion for it, be continually leaping over Hedges and Ditches to the Hazard of their Necks, and for*

that Reaſon call themſelves the only free Men, *becauſe they do not confine themſelves to the common Road, there is no Help for it: This may be* Freedom *for ought I know, but I will venture to affirm that it is the* Freedom of Fools: *A wiſe Man knows himſelf to be* abundantly free, *when he has the Ground to walk upon, without any Hazard, whitherſoever he pleaſes; whereas a fooliſh Boy thinks himſelf under ſad Reſtraint, if he may not walk in Stilts, and climb up to Places where he is perpetually in Danger of falling.*

But I am not concerned in the following Diſcourſes with any of theſe Parts *of our Author's huge Performance, which have been and will be fully conſidered and anſwered by much better Hands. All that I propoſe is,* To explain the Nature of our Chriſtian Salvation, *which this Author is pleaſed to object againſt; and to vindicate our Belief of it in point of human Reaſon and the Nature of Things; and to ſhew the Groundleſneſs of thoſe pretended Arguments, which with great Confidence, and greater Ignorance, have been produced againſt it by this unbelieving Writer; and which with great Induſtry, and no leſs triumphing againſt Chriſtianity, have been diſperſed and propagated through a great Part of the Nation by his deluded Followers, ſuch as deſire to encourage themſelves and others* in Looſeneſs of Principles *and* Licentiouſneſs of Practice. *If I ſucceed in this Deſign, and can convince any unprejudiced and impartial Thinkers of the Unreaſonableneſs of Infidelity, and the Folly of running headlong into the faſhionable Errors of it, and ſpeaking evil of that Religion which they know nothing of, as this Author has done; I ſhall have my End: If not, I muſt content myſelf with having born my Teſtimony to what I am convinced is the Truth, and ſit down with the Satisfaction of having contributed my poor Endeavours, toward retrieving a corrupt Age from that Wickedneſs and Irreligion with which it is ſo miſerably overſpread, and of having ſhewn with how much Heartineſs and Sincerity I am,*

Dear GENTLEMEN,

Univ. Coll. Oxon.
May 4, 1732.

Your moſt Affectionate Friend,

and Humble Servant,

THO. COCKMAN.

ACTS iv. 12.

Neither is there Salvation in any other : for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

THE Perſon here ſpoken of, *as the only Author of Salvation* to us, is Jeſus Chriſt of *Nazareth*, (as appears from the 10*th* Verſe of this Chapter;) and the Words are Part of one of the firſt Diſcourſes, that were made upon the Subject of the Chriſtian Religion, ſoon after the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Saviour. What the Occaſion of them was, is ſufficiently plain from the foregoing Chapter, and the preceding Verſes of this. They contain in them in Subſtance two Things, one of which is ſuppoſed, and the other expreſsly aſſerted: The Thing ſuppoſed is, That *we* (by which I underſtand all Mankind) were by ſome means or other involved in ſuch Circumſtances, as that we ſtood in need of being *ſaved out of them :* And the Thing aſſerted is, That *ſuch Salvation* is no otherwiſe to be had, than only through the Merit or Procurement of Jeſus Chriſt, there being *none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

What I deſign at preſent from the Words is, to give ſome Account of the Nature of that Salvation, *for which* (as we profeſs in one of our *Creeds* to believe) our Bleſſed Saviour *came down from Heaven*, and was *incarnate*, and *ſuffered Death* upon the Croſs in our Nature; and to vindicate the Reaſonableneſs of ſuch our Belief from the Objections made againſt it by the Infidels of our Times, *Men of corrupt Minds, Reprobate concerning the Faith, turning the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs, and denying* (if not *the only Lord God himſelf*, yet however) our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; and more particularly from the Cavils of a late unbelieving Writer, who under the *ſham Pretence* of aſſerting the Antiquity of the Chriſtian Religion, and proving it *as Old as the Creation*, has made

it his real Endeavour with the utmoſt Malice to vilify and explode it. In the further Proſecution of this Argument, I ſhall reduce what I have to offer under the Three following Heads.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall endeavour to ſettle the right Notion of that Chriſtian Salvation, which is here aſſerted to be *in Chriſt Jeſus only*, and ſhew how Mankind came to ſtand in need of it.

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew, That it is no otherwiſe attainable than only through Chriſt Jeſus, and in virtue of his attoning and interceding for us, and endeavour to explain the *Reaſonableneſs* of this Doctrine.

III. *Thirdly*, I ſhall endeavour to anſwer the Objections which are uſually made againſt it by our modern Unbelievers, and eſpecially by the fore-mentioned Writer; which will further illuſtrate the Juſtice of God's Proceedings in this whole Diſpenſation, and ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of our believing and practiſing upon this great Article of our Chriſtian Faith.

I. *Firſt*, I am to endeavour to ſettle the right Notion of that Chriſtian Salvation, which is here aſſerted to be *in Chriſt Jeſus only*. *Salvation* or being ſaved (as every one knows) not only in Scripture, but in common and ordinary Language, has always a relation to ſome Evil or Calamity, which the Party is ſaid to be delivered or ſaved out of. And accordingly as Evils are of different kinds, ſome temporal and others ſpiritual; ſome affecting our Bodies or outward Circumſtances, and others our Souls and their everlaſting State; ſo a Perſon's Deliverance from any one of theſe, may be, and often is, expreſſed by his being *ſaved* from it: Thus Men may be *ſaved* from bodily Diſtempers, as well as from Sin and Death; and God is ſaid to have *ſaved* his People *Iſrael* out of the Land of *Egypt*, as well as to ſave Men from the Wrath to come. And indeed ſome Writers of no ſmall Note underſtand St. *Peter* here in the former of theſe Senſes, as if he had only ſaid *And ſuch Salvation as this which you have ſeen*, in this impotent Man's being thus delivered from his Lameneſs, is not to be had by any other but by Chriſt Jeſus only, there being no other Name under Heaven by which Men can be ſaved *after ſuch a Manner*. Whether the Apoſtle meant no more than this by the Expreſſions of the Text, as I am far from affirming, ſo I can hardly think it worth the while to diſpute; ſince however his

Meaning

Meaning may be reſtrained in this Place, there are many other Paſſages (and indeed *the whole Tenour of the New Teſtament*,) in which Man's Salvation, *viz.* his *eternal Salvation from Sin and Death*, is peculiarly aſcribed to our Saviour as the Author of it, and the Doctrine was never yet denied by any Chriſtian; ſo that we need not be ſollicitous about proving it from the *Text* itſelf; and it will be ſufficient for us, to explain the Nature of that *eternal Salvation*, which we profeſs to believe he came from Heaven to purchaſe for us, and that State of Evil which by his Means we are ſaved from.

In order hereunto give me leave to obſerve to you, That Man (the proper Subject of the Salvation here ſpoken of) as he ſtands in relation to Almighty God, may be conſidered by us under two different Lights, *viz.* 1*ſt*, *That of a Creature*, deſigned, ordained, and made by God after ſuch and ſuch a Nature; endowed with ſuch and ſuch Faculties and Powers as were originally conceived in the *Divine Underſtanding*, and approved of and ordered by the *Divine Will*, before they had an actual Exiſtence by Creation: Or, 2*dly*, *That of a ſinful and degenerate* Creature which by its own Fault and the ill Uſe of thoſe Faculties, had fallen from the original Perfection of Nature which was firſt given to it, and thereby diſpleaſed and offended that God who was the Author of that Nature, as being no longer the ſame Creature which He at firſt deſigned and made it.

If we conſider Man under the former of theſe Lights, we cannot but believe (as all the World have done before us) that he was *innocent*, and *uncorrupt*, and *perfect in his Kind*, *and in that Place which he was to hold in the Rank of Beings*, as he came originally out of the Hands of his Creator; it being abſolutely unconceiveable that an infinitely *holy*, and *pure*, and *perfect* Being (ſuch as all the World who profeſs to believe a God, have always acknowledged Him to be) ſhould produce a Creature altogether repugnant to, and inconſiſtent with the Properties and Attributes of his own Nature: For this would plainly be as abſurd and as repugnant to the Nature and Reaſon of Things, as for Light to produce Darkneſs, for the Vine to bring forth the Fruit of the Thorn, or the Fig-tree that of the Thiſtle. If this *were* ſo, the Divine Artificer muſt either have wanted *Wiſdom* to contrive his Work, or *Goodneſs* to deſire it, or *Power* to execute what He had contrived and deſired, after a better Manner: But no Man's Reaſon will give him leave to believe this, or any Part of it, concerning a *Being*, who is on all hands confeſſed to be of *infi-*

nite Wiſdom to contrive, of *infinite Goodneſs* to deſire, and of *infinite Power* to execute, every thing for the beſt. We muſt lay it down therefore as a fundamental Truth, which *natural Reaſon proceeding from clear Ideas* (as this Author expreſſes it) *of the Character of the Divine Being*, as well as Holy Scripture, aſſures us of, *That Man was originally* created with an *upright* and *perfect* Nature. And as every Artiſt who produces a piece of Work, in the Nature of the thing muſt be ſuppoſed to deſire, that his Work ſhould anſwer all thoſe Ends and Purpoſes for which it was fitted and intended: And as all other Creatures, both animate and inanimate, had Laws given to them proportioned to their reſpective Natures, by which God *willed* them to act after ſuch a manner as was fit and proper for them in their reſpective Stations; ſo when he made Man after ſuch a particular Nature, gave him an underſtanding Soul to direct him in the right Way, and Freedom of Will to chuſe the Good and refuſe the Evil, or (as *Moſes* expreſſes it) *created him after His own Image and Likeneſs*; we cannot but think it to have been the *Will* of God (not *arbitrary* and *tyrannical Will*, as this Author almoſt every where ſpeaks, but a *Will* that always ſteers itſelf by the Rules of perfect and unerring Reaſon:) I ſay, we cannot but think it to have been the *Will of God*, and conſequently a *Law to Man*, that he, as well as all other Creatures, ſhould act after ſuch a manner as was *fitting*, *proper*, and *congruous* to that Nature which God had beſtowed upon him. And the Obligation laid upon Man at the Beginning by the Will of his Creator to behave himſelf according to the *Dignity of his Nature*, and to the *Fitneſſes*, *Congruities*, or *Reaſons* of Things, is what I underſtand by the *Law* or (if you pleaſe) the *Religion of Nature*.

Pag. 330.

And this Law of Nature I imagine to receive its obliging Force, not barely from the Fitneſs or Agreeableneſs of Things as ſuch (which tho' they may *move and ſomewhat encline* the Will, yet can have no Power to lay *an Obligation* upon any Man;) but from the *Will* and Deſign of the great Author of *Nature*, who only has both *Power* and *Right* to oblige us, and who muſt be ſuppoſed (as was juſt now obſerved) to intend and will that Man, as well as the reſt of his Creatures, ſhould act in ſuch a Manner as was fit and ſuited to that reaſonable Nature which he had given to him. And this *Intention and Will of God* thoſe Fitneſſes and Agreeableneſſes of Things are (I imagine) the proper *Means* of diſcovering to every unbiaſſed Underſtanding; ſo that *they reſult* from the Nature of Things themſelves, and are at the ſame time declarative of the Will of the Creator of them, and ſo are rather Means of promulgating

gating to Mankind the Law of Nature, and diſcover to them the Will and Deſign of its Author, than *conſtitutive Parts* of the Law itſelf. It is *God* therefore (as this Author truly expreſſes it) *who plainly ſpeaks to us by the Things themſelves*, and by the Relation which Reaſon ſhews there is between them; and nothing more is required to the perfect Notion of a Law, than the *Will of the rightful Law-giver ſufficiently publiſhed and made known to thoſe who are to be directed by it.*

This Law, as it reſulted immediately from human Nature as deſigned and created by Almighty God, ſo was obligatory upon Man as ſoon as he was created, in his original State of *Incorruption* and *Innocence*; (for had he been ſubject to no Law at that Time, it is evident that he could not have been guilty of any Tranſgreſſion) and has continued the ſame *without Change* or *Alteration* ever ſince, and *does* now under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, and *will continue the ſame* as long as human Nature laſts. For though (it is true) the State of Things is very *unhappily altered* ſince the firſt Eſtabliſhment of them when the Law was made; yet that *Alteration* does not lie on the Part of the *Law itſelf*, or of *God* the Author of it, but of *Man* who was immediately ſubject to the Law, and originally enabled to know and do all that was contained in it. *Mankind* indeed (as a Right Reverend Prelate of our Church well expreſſes it) *is much the worſe for having broken the Law of Nature, but the Law itſelf is not the worſe for having been broken and abuſed by him, but ſtill remains in its primitive Purity and Simplicity.* The Law ſtill requires us, as it did at the Beginning, to do all that is *holy*, and *juſt*, and *good*, and no Jot or Tittle of it is ſuffered to fail under the Religion of Chriſt Jeſus, as He himſelf aſſures us: But Man, under the preſent Degeneracy of his Nature (which he has fallen into by being left *in the Hands of his own Counſels*) is now become a Subject uncapable of knowing and doing (by his own Strength) a great Part of it.

The Law therefore or Religion of Nature I will ſuppoſe to be *invariably the ſame* now as it was in the State of Innocence, when Man was juſt created after the Image of God; but the Power of knowing and doing the Things contained in it, on Man's Part not to be entirely the ſame. But ſtill, though in Equity there is no Obligation to Impoſſibilities, yet a Law as ſuch may retain its obliging Force, as to the *Rule or directive Part* of it, (though perhaps not as to the *Penalty* or *coercive* Part) though Men by *Sickneſs*, *Lunacy*, or the like (and much more by *their own Faults*) may, after the Publication of it, become uncapable of paying a due Obedience

to

to it: And accordingly this Law of God and Nature (I imagine) does ſtill retain its *obliging Force*, though in the *Exerciſe of it* (through the Mercy and Grace of God) it will actually be applied to thoſe Subjects only, *who are in, and ſo far as they are in*, a Poſſibility of knowing and doing what that Law requires of them. A Law may oblige as a Rule of Action, and yet the Subject be juſtly excuſable and not capable of being *obliged with Effect*, through invincible *Ignorance* or other Defect which is on his Part inſuperable. *As far* therefore as Mankind in general, or each individual Perſon in particular, is in any *Poſſibility natural or moral* of knowing and doing what the Will and Law of God and their Nature require of them, by taking notice of thoſe *Fitneſſes* or *Reaſons of Things*, which God has interwoven with the very Natures of them; (which was the *original Publication* of it;) or *by the Rules and Precepts* laid down in the Goſpel, which this Author affirms to be a *Republication of the ſame:* So far they are ſtill *effectually obliged* by that Law, and may juſtly have the Penalty of it (*viz. Death, or Separation from the Preſence of God*, and that for ever and ever) applied to them, if by any Fault or Neglect of theirs they do not behave accordingly. I ſay *may juſtly have the Penalty, viz.* Death, *applied to them:* For though the Religion or Law of Nature (as was juſt now obſerved from an excellent Father of our Church) *is not the worſe for having been abuſed, but ſtill retains its firſt Purity and Simplicity*; yet no body but this Writer would have inferred from hence,
Pag. 281. That conſequently it muſt retain *its native Efficacy to make Men happy*, even though they had abuſed it: As if a Law continuing in its Purity and Simplicity could be of Efficacy to make thoſe happy, who had made themſelves the contrary by being guilty of the Breach of it, and conſequently being under its Condemnation, by living either in a ſupine Negligence or an avowed Tranſgreſſion of the Precepts of it.

Had Man indeed continued to live in due Obedience to the Law of his Nature and Reaſon, he would have continued to be ſuch as God originally deſigned and made him; and conſequently would have continued to be approved and accepted by Him; it being impoſſible to conceive that He ſhould create any Being which he did not approve of; or that He ſhould reject or deſpiſe the very Work of his own Hand, ſo long as it continued to be the very ſame as he intended it. Man in this Caſe, *had he fulfilled and lived up to the Law of his perfect Nature*, would have needed no *Salvation*; ſince he would have had no Evil, either of Sin or Puniſhment, which he would have wanted to be

be *ſaved* from: But by tranſgreſſing the Law he drew down Evil upon himſelf. For every Law in the Nature of the Thing muſt *acquit* and *juſtify* in the Sight of the Law-giver thoſe who perform all that is required by it; as every one on the contrary, muſt *find guilty* and *condemn* thoſe who tranſgreſs its Precepts. Had Mankind therefore done the Works of the Law, they would have lived and been accepted in the ſight of their Creator by thoſe Works; and when St. *Paul* tells us, (as he does in many Places) *That by the Works of the Law no Fleſh living ſhall be juſtified*, his Meaning plainly is, *That no Fleſh living have fulfilled the Works of the Law*; but all muſt acknowledge, when they compare their Works with the *Perfection*, *Holineſs*, and *Goodneſs* of the Law, that in many things they have been Tranſgreſſors of it; *for by the Law* (as he expreſſes it) *is the Knowledge of Sin*; *i. e.* all Men muſt know and acknowledge that they have ſinned: Whereas, had Men done what the Law required of them in all Points, they would certainly have lived and been ſaved by doing it; *The Man that doth theſe Things ſhall live by them*, being Part of the very *Sanction* of the Law itſelf.

The Queſtion therefore between us and our modern Infidels, is not (as this Writer all along blunderingly ſuppoſes) *Whether God by Nature, and the Law reſulting from it, had made ſufficient Proviſion for the Happineſs of Mankind?* for this was never doubted, *had Man behaved as he ſhould have done:* But *Whether*, upon Man's having *abuſed this ſufficient Proviſion, and thereby forfeited his Title to that Happineſs*, God was pleaſed of His Mercy to come to *new Terms* with him, and (in Conſideration of *ſome Satisfaction* for paſt Offences, and *ſome Conditions* to be performed on Man's Part for the Time to come) to reſtore him again to that Happineſs which he had loſt?

But, 2*dly*, if we conſider Man under the other Light mentioned, not as coming out of the Hands of his Creator infinitely *wiſe*, and *powerful*, and *good*, but as left in the *Hands of his own Counſels*; not as a perfect and innocent Creature, but as polluted and fallen (by his own Fault) from his *native Innocence* and *Perfection:* And, in ſhort, not as a Keeper, but as a Tranſgreſſor of the Law of God and his own Nature; (which this Author has wholly left out in his Account) we ſhall find a new Scene of Things open to us. He whom God originally made *upright by Nature*, in a little time made himſelf *preternaturally a Sinner*; and thereby, inſtead of being accepted by God and continuing in his Favour, incurred the Divine Diſpleaſure, and loſt the Favour of Him with

whom no Evil can dwell; and, inſtead of obtaining Life by *doing the Things of the Law*, drew upon himſelf Death (the Penalty of breaking the Law) by doing juſt the contrary. From hence there reſulted a *new Relation between God and Man*, which never was in the Time of Man's Innocence, and never would have been had he continued in that Innocence, *viz.* That which is between the *offended* and *offending* Parties; and conſequently new *Fitneſſes*, *Reaſonableneſſes*, or *Congruities* of Things, ariſing from this new Relation, as to the Behaviour of each Party toward the other, *with Regard to forgiving and obtaining Forgiveneſs*. The Law was given to Man in his perfect State, *when he needed no Forgiveneſs*; but the Chriſtian Covenant was made afterward upon Occaſion of his having ſinned and fallen from his perfect State, and therefore *wanting to be forgiven*. But ſtill the Chriſtian Religion, or Method of Man's being pardoned by means of an Attonement and Interceſſor, was founded as truly upon the then *preſent Nature and Reaſon of Things*, as the Law of Nature was upon the *original Conſtitution of them*; and as the latter conſiſted in what was fit and reaſonable to be done *in order to avoid Sin*; ſo the former conſiſts in what was fit and reaſonable to be done both on God's Part and Man's, *in order to the purging away of Sin after it had been committed*.

It is an injurious way of proceeding in *this Writer* therefore, to repreſent Chriſtianity (which he almoſt continually does) as an Enemy to Mens following the *Light of Nature and Reaſon*: Whereas it requires Men (on the contrary) to adhere to that Light, ſo far as it can poſſibly be a *ſufficient Guide* to them, or of any Service to their Happineſs: But, ſuppoſing Men, either through Ignorance or Perverſeneſs, to have acted contrary to this Guide, and thereby made themſelves Sinners; it is evident that the *Light of Reaſon* can neither pardon their Sins, nor aſcertain to them the Conditions upon which God, the *offended* Party, will be pleaſed to pardon them: So that for both theſe they muſt have recourſe to ſomething elſe, *viz.* to the Grace and Mercy of God for *Pardon*; and to the more full Diſcovery of His Will by Revelation for the *Terms and Conditions upon which he will grant that Pardon*. For
Pag. 340. though the Light of Nature, as this Author tells us, may dictate to us indeed what is properly our Duty in order *to our not ſinning*; yet it can never dictate to us *what God will pleaſe to require by way of Attonement and Satisfaction* before He can pardon us *after we have ſinned*.

The Chriſtian Religion, *preciſely* taken (as diſtinguiſhed from that of meer Nature and Reaſon, and containing *the Œconomy of Man's*

Man's Salvation and Forgiveneſs) begins here, and is plainly founded upon this Suppoſition, *That Man is fallen from the original Purity and Happineſs of his Nature by making himſelf a Sinner*; and has rendered himſelf obnoxious (by the Tenour of the Law) to *that Condemnation and Death* which is the Penalty of the Breach of it, unleſs ſome Remedy be found out for this Evil. This Condition of Man, conſidered as the *offending Party*, is what the Scripture ſeems to mean by the *Power*, the *Dominion*, the *Kingdom of Darkneſs*, *of Death and the Grave*, *of Sin and Satan*; the *Body of Sin and Death*, the *Curſe of the Law*, with ſeveral other Expreſſions amounting to the ſame thing, and ſignifying *that by reaſon of our having abuſed the Law*, we muſt (ſo far as *the Law* is concerned, and without the Interpoſition of ſome *Grace and Mercy*) be liable to that Death which is the Condemnation and Curſe of it: And all Men, as having offended againſt the Law, are repreſented as involved in this unhappy State, and fallen ſhort of that Glory which God originally deſigned them for.

This is the Condition of Man by fallen Nature, and conſidered as *under the Law and yet a Breaker of it*, and *without a Saviour*. This is the Evil, the State of Sin and Condemnation, which he ſtands in need of being delivered from; and his being delivered from it, and reſtored to the Favour and Acceptance of God again, ſo as to have the Rigour of the Law mitigated, and the Execution of it taken away, by the Goodneſs and Grace of God, through the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, (as Chriſtianity teaches us) is what I underſtood by *Salvation* or *being ſaved* in the Chriſtian Senſe of thoſe Expreſſions, and ſeems to have been intended by the *Kingdom of God* and *of Heaven*, *of Chriſt*, and *of Light*, as ſtanding in oppoſition to the Dominion of *Sin and Death*, of *Satan and Darkneſs*, but juſt now mentioned. And as Man had forfeited his Hope of Life and Happineſs through his own Diſobedience before the Chriſtian Religion, and is reſtored to it again through Chriſt, and in virtue of his Attonement and Interceſſion for us; ſo he may juſtly cry out, and ought to anſwer with the Apoſtle, *Wretched Man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death! I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And this brings me to the *Second* General. Rom. vii. 24, 25.

II. *Secondly*, To ſhew, *That this Salvation is no otherwiſe attainable than only through Chriſt Jeſus.* To endeavour to prove this by *ſingle Paſſages* of Holy Scripture would be to very little or no Purpoſe; ſince it is plain (which is ſufficient for us who are Chriſtians, and

and profeſs to be determined by thoſe ſacred Writings) that the whole *Courſe and Tenour* of the *New Teſtament* is entirely built upon the Suppoſition of this Truth, and our Saviour accordingly is there every where ſpoken of as *the Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of the World*, as *the Peace-maker and Reconciler between God and Man*, as *the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of Mankind, and purges us from the Pollution of them by his own Blood*; with ſeveral other Expreſſions all amounting to the ſame thing. Neither would it be more proper (conſidering the Perſons whom we have to deal with) to endeavour to prove this by any expreſs Authority whatſoever of Holy Scripture; ſince it is plain that our Adverſaries (though they do not think it proper as yet to ſpeak out) have no Regard at all for thoſe ſacred Oracles; and, inſtead of believing, would rather reject a thing the ſooner, upon account of its being any wiſe built upon their Authority. Laying aſide therefore at preſent that Proof, which is taken from the *immediate Authority* of the *New Teſtament*, (which is very full and expreſs to our preſent Purpoſe) I ſhall only make two or three Obſervations under this Head, which will at once tend to ſhew, *That in point of unbiaſſed and impartial Reaſon*, we ought to believe that Mankind are ſaved by the Death and Interceſſion of our Saviour only, and withal *explain in what Senſe they are ſo*; that we may the better underſtand and ſee the Reaſonableneſs of that Chriſtian Doctrine, which theſe Gentlemen object againſt, and diſcover the Errors and Weakneſs of their Objections.

1. Firſt then I muſt obſerve, That whatſoever *rational Grounds* there are for believing the *Authentickneſs*, and much more the *Divine Inſpiration*, of the Books of the *New Teſtament*, there are the ſame for believing and embracing this Doctrine: For ſince it is moſt evidently contained in *thoſe Writings*; if they are the authentick and genuine Works of the Men whoſe Names they bear, they ought in Reaſon to weigh with every impartial Thinker, at leaſt as much as the Writings of an equal Number of profane Authors; and St. *Paul*'s or any other Apoſtle's Aſſertions may as *juſtly and reaſonably* demand our Aſſent to them, as thoſe of *Lucian* or *Porphyry*, of *Julian* or *Celſus*, or any other of thoſe who were profeſſed Enemies to Chriſtianity. But if thoſe Writings, beſides their Authentickneſs, are of Divine Inſpiration, and it is God Himſelf who *in theſe laſt Days hath ſpoken to us by our Saviour and his Apoſtles*; then the Truth of this Doctrine is beyond all Contradiction, as proceeding from the Fountain of Truth itſelf, and aſſerted by Him who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Thoſe Perſons therefore, who give themſelves

ſelves the faſhionable Airs of diſbelieving the Chriſtian Doctrine, and who *pronounce* at leaſt freely (however they may *think*) *that there is nothing at all in it*, becauſe in truth *they underſtand nothing of it*, ought, before they reject it, to conſider throughly all thoſe Arguments which are produced for the Authority of the Books of the *New Teſtament*, and fairly to convince themſelves that they are neither inſpired nor authentick: And this they ought to do in the way of *ſober Reaſoning*, and not (as has uſually been the Practice of ſuch Perſons) by culling out of them particular Facts or Paſſages, which profane Wits may eaſily turn into *Jeſt and Ridicule*; a Method unworthy of *truly rational and impartial Thinkers*, and fit to be uſed by none but little Jeſters and Buffoons.

2. Secondly I would obſerve, That whatever Arguments are brought for the Certainty of our *Saviour's Reſurrection*, are ſo many Reaſons for our believing of this Doctrine; for if *He was declared to be the Son of God with Power* (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *by his* Rom. i. 4. *Reſurrection from the Dead*, there can be no room left for any rational Man to doubt of the Truth of whatever He came to teach; and this was evidently one Part of it, *That He was ſent from Heaven to lay down His Life for, and thereby to ſave the World.* Every Man, therefore, who *freely and impartially* conſults his own Reaſon, muſt either give up his Aſſent to this Truth, of which God has given him Aſſurance by His raiſing our Saviour from the Dead; or elſe ought to ſhew, That the Fact of the Reſurrection is not ſufficiently made appear to the Eye of Reaſon, as being *either impoſſible* in itſelf, or *not fully atteſted* by a proper Number of Witneſſes, or *not of ſuch as* deſerved for their Knowledge and Integrity to be relied upon in a Matter of ſuch Importance: But if Chriſt's Reſurrection is not impoſſible in itſelf, and is more fully made appear, both for the Number and Credibility of its Witneſſes, than is uſually required to convince Mens Reaſon (nay, *theſe very Mens Reaſon*) in any other Caſe, and yet they refuſe to be convinced in this; it is evident that there is in them (as St. *Paul* expreſſes it) *ſome Root of Bitterneſs*, and their Infidelity is owing (whatever they may pretend) *to ſome other Cauſe than want of rational Proof.*

What is here ſaid concerning the Reſurrection of our Bleſſed Saviour, is proportionably true of thoſe Miracles which were wrought by Himſelf, and by His Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel: For ſince thoſe Miracles were wrought *in purſuance and for the Confirmation* of the Doctrines which were publickly preached by them; they can reaſonably be looked upon as nothing elſe, but God's giving his Atteſtation to the Truth of thoſe Doctrines,

Ch. xvi. ver. 20. and (as St. *Mark* expreſſes it) *His working with them, and confirming their Word with Signs following:* And therefore before any Man in common Reaſon, can ſet up for a Diſbeliever of this Doctrine, he ought fairly to be able (not *ſcornfully* to pronounce, as is uſual with ſuch Perſons, but) to convince himſelf by *free and impartial Reaſoning*, either that there never were any ſuch Miracles, or (if that is a Fact too notorious to be denied) that they were not wrought by the Power of God, but were the Effects of Juggling, or brought about by evil Spirits.

3. But becauſe the Perſons whom we have to deal with ſeem much more likely to be affected with any thing that comes from the Pagans, than any thing that bears any relation to Scripture or Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; I ſhall beg leave in the Third Place to obſerve to them, That the whole *Religion of the Pagan or Gentile World*, (whether we mean that of *the Patriarchs* or others before *Moſes*, or that of any *other Nations diſtinct from the Jews* afterwards) at leaſt of the *wiſer and more rational* Parts of it, whoſe Writings we have extant among us to this Day, was apparently built upon Three fundamental Principles, which are all of them allowed and admitted of as Principles in the Chriſtian Religion now, only freed from thoſe Errors and Miſtakes which they run into for want of a due Application of them: And conſequently, Chriſtianity, as to its general Principles, lays down nothing but what was always thought *conſonant and agreeable to the higheſt Reaſon of Mankind*, and was always practiſed upon as ſuch (as far as we can find) from the very Beginning of Hiſtory.

By *Religion* here I mean, not *primary Religion* which God *originally* required of all Mankind, as immediately reſulting from their perfect Nature, which conſiſts in *worſhipping and ſerving Him*, and acknowledging our conſtant dependance on Him, and, in one word, *all the Religion of Nature*; but that which is *ſecondary*, which conſiſts in doing what is proper and neceſſary, and what God (upon a Suppoſition of our having broken His primary Commands) requires *ſecondarily* to be done as fit and proper for the *Vindication of His Juſtice and Holineſs*, before he can pardon us, and receive us into His Mercy and Favour again; ſuch as *Repentance*, *confeſſing and forſaking Sins*, and whatever *Satisfaction* He may think fit to inſiſt upon, as a Condition of our being forgiven and pardoned for our Tranſgreſſions; in one word, the whole Œconomy of Man's *Salvation or Redemption after he had ſinned*. It is one thing for a Prince to give a Body of moſt excellent and wholſome Laws to his Subjects, and to require and intend *primarily* their Obedience to them; and another, ſuppoſing

poſing them to have failed in that Obedience, to require *ſecondarily* ſuch and ſuch Submiſſions to be made, and ſuch or ſuch Things to be done or ſuffered, as *Conditions of his pardoning* them, and receiving them again into his Favour: So it is one thing for God to give a Law to Mankind at his firſt Creation *which ought not to have been broken*; and another, when it *has been and continually is broken* (as, I ſuppoſe, theſe Gentlemen will allow me) to preſcribe *ſecondarily* the proper Terms, upon which He may, *fitly and conſiſtently with His own Attributes*, forgive the Breach of it. *Religion* (whether *Patriarchal*, *Jewiſh*, or *Chriſtian*) in its full Extent comprehends both of theſe; but I take it in this Place as confined to the latter only, *viz.* the *Method of Man's Salvation or being pardoned, ſuppoſing him to have firſt offended*; and to ſay (as our Author does) that *this is no more than a Republication of the Law of Nature*, is juſt as wiſe as to ſay, *That a Prince's pardoning an Offender againſt his Law, is only a Republication of the very Law which had condemned him.*

If we take Religion in this reſtrained Senſe, it is evident in the firſt place, that it was always acknowledged as a Principle by the *Gentile* World, *That Mankind were degenerated* from that Innocence and Purity wherein they were firſt created, had ſome way or other polluted themſelves with Sin, and thereby incurred the Diſpleaſure of the Deity. This appears from thoſe Complaints, which every one muſt have met with in their ancient Writers, of *Mens having run headlong into all kinds of Wickedneſs*, of *the primitive Golden Age's being turned into an Iron one*, and *Fraud and Violence's having got Poſſeſſion of the Earth*, ſo that *original Righteouſneſs was forced to fly out of it*; and the like.

As Mankind by ſinning had offended the Supreme Being, ſo it was the next Principle of the Religion of the *Antients* (whom I will ſuppoſe as *good Judges, of what was reaſonable, congruous, and fitting to be done* by Creatures in their Circumſtances, *who had offended their Creator*, as any of us now are:) I ſay, it was a ſecond Principle, which Nature and the Reaſon of Things dictated to *them*, *That ſomething ought to be done by way of Attonement* and Expiation, which might be a Means of appeaſing the offended Deity, and avert from them that Puniſhment which they were liable to: But what would be a ſufficient Attonement for them, they were wholly ignorant, and could go no farther than only to offer up the beſt Things they had, to try whether they would prevail, and procure for them Pardon at the Hands of God, or not: [*Modum reconciliandi hominem cum Deo* (ſays a *late Author* of a neighbouring Nation)

Urſin. de Relig. Nat. Cultuq; Dei Rationali.

tion) *ratio ignorat, licet expiatione quadam opus esse satis clare cognoscat.*] And this, in all probability, was what first gave Occasion to that Method, which we know generally prevailed among them, of endeavouring to avert the Displeasure of the Deity by the most *costly Sacrifices*; which they (some of them) carried to such an Height, as not only to give *Hecatombes*, and (as the Prophet *Micah* expresses it) *thousands of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl*, but even to offer up *their First-born for their Transgressions, the Fruit of their Bodies for the Sins of their Souls.*

And because they were persuaded in their own Reason, *That an infinitely holy, and pure, and just Being* (such as they acknowledged the Deity to be) could never *immediately* accept of the Persons or Services of such *sinful, vile, and polluted Creatures* as they had made themselves; therefore they concluded, and seem to have laid it down as a third Principle of their Religion, *That there must be some Being or Beings to mediate and interpose* between them and the most holy and high God, by whose Interest, transacting or interceeding for them, their Persons and Oblations (however otherwise unworthy) might be accepted by Him. But here again they were as much in the Dark as before; and not knowing any *Mediator appointed* between God and them, they endeavoured to chuse such, as (in their own Imaginations) they conceived most likely to be of Service to them; such as either the *Host of Heaven, the Sun, Moon, and Stars*, (whom they believed to be Intelligences of an high and exalted Nature) or such Men as they believed by their Virtues and great Actions to have been Favourites of Heaven while they lived here upon Earth, and therefore most likely to have an Interest in the Court of it, now that they were gone to reside there. And this, in all probability, gave Occasion to that Number of inferior Deities (those *Gods many and Lords many*, as the Apostle speaks) which we meet with in the *Gentile* World, and introduced the greatest part of that idolatrous Worship, which in time they became so notoriously guilty of.

Christianity confirms and establishes the Truth in general of these three Principles, which Mankind before (we must say) *had fallen into by the bare Use and Guidance of their own natural Reason*, since our Adversaries will not allow of such a thing as a Revelation. No Man, therefore, can now set up his *own Reason in Opposition to Christianity*, as to these three Particulars, without opposing at the same time the *common Sense and Reason of all the best Part of Mankind in all Ages of the World*; since they have *all*, as well as Christians, concurred in the Acknowledgment of them; only

only what they ſaw but darkly and confuſedly by the *naked Eye of Reaſon*, Chriſtianity ſhews in its true and proper Light by the Help of *Revelation*, both with Regard to the *particular Sacrifice and Expiation* that was to be made for Sins; and the *particular Perſon* who was ordained to be the Mediator between God and Man.

As to the *firſt* of the three Principles, we are expreſsly told in the Chriſtian Revelation, *That all Mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, are under Sin*; not only as by the preſent Weakneſs of their Nature they fall ſhort of that *perfect Image* wherein God created them, and by conſequence are *deficient in point of that Perfection which they naturally ought to have* (which has the Nature of *Sin* in it;) but likewiſe as they have *actually and perſonally* tranſgreſſed that *perfectly holy, and juſt, and good Law* which God gave them at firſt, (beſide the expreſs Command of *Not eating of the forbidden Fruit*, which *Moſes* ſpeaks of,) and have thereby rendered themſelves liable to that *Death* (whatever it is) which is the Penalty of the Breach of it: So that if God ſhould *enter into Judgment with them*, they muſt all be under Condemnation by the Tenour of the Law, and *no Man living could be juſtified in His Sight*.

It is not imaginable therefore *in point of common Reaſon*, that any Man can be *ſaved* by the Merit of his *own Actions*; ſince every Man by *them* has confeſſedly done amiſs; and if God ſhould be extreme to mark what is ſo done amiſs, no Man living would be able to abide it. Seeing then Man in his preſent fallen State is a *polluted Creature*, which has to do with an *holy and pure Creator*; a *ſinful Tranſgreſſor* of the Law given to him, with reſpect to a *perfect and juſt Giver* of it; it is hardly poſſible for us in Reaſon to conceive, that the former could be admitted by, and be allowed to have Freedom of Acceſs to, the latter, without ſome *Satisfaction or Propitiation* firſt made to His *Juſtice and Holineſs*; or without ſome *one to mediate* in Behalf of the unworthy and tranſgreſſing Party. And accordingly Chriſtianity not only proceeds upon *theſe Principles in general*, (as the Patriarchs and wiſer *Gentiles* of old did) but applies them more *particularly*; *and diſtinctly* teaches us (what the bare Light of Reaſon could never poſſibly have taught Men) *that it is Jeſus Chriſt alone* who is that only Sacrifice, and Propitiation to attone for the Sins of the World; and *that it is He alone* (the only Son of God, united to human Nature, and ſo at the ſame time both *God and Man*) who is appointed the *Mediator and Interceſſor* betwixt God and Man; by whom, from being Enemies, we are made Children of God; and from being diſcarded,

and for ever ſeparated from His Preſence, we are now accepted and allowed to have Acceſs with Confidence to the Throne of His Grace; ſo that *He is the ſole Saviour* of us from that Guilt and Condemnation which we were under by the Law, and (as St. *Paul* words it) *the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey Him.*

Whether or no the *Gentile* or Heathen World (I mean the better and wiſer Part of them) had any Belief of ſuch a Deliverance to be wrought for them by *a Son of God*, I cannot affirm; if they had, it is certain that it could not proceed from any Deductions of Reaſon, but muſt owe its Original to ſome Revelation made to ſome of their Forefathers, and by them handed down to their Poſterity after them. Thus much however it may be worth while to obſerve, That in *Virgil*'s Account of the *Reſtoration* of the World, (which undoubtedly was taken from the *Sybylline* Books, or ſome *Tradition* that was amongſt them) the *Reſtorer* of it is ſtiled *Chara Deûm ſoboles, magnum Jovis incrementum:* And that the Perſon who was the *Meſſenger* ſent by the moſt high God, the *Interpreter and Foreteller* of the Mind of Heaven, the *Maker of God's Inſtruments*, by which He was to be avenged of His Enemies, the *great Conquerors and Deliverers of Mankind* from Monſters, and the final Judges of the Dead; the *Gentiles Mercury* and *Apollo*, their *Vulcan* and *Bacchus*, their *Hercules* and *Perſeus*, their *Æacus* and *Minos*, are all of them repreſented in their poetical *Mythology* as the *Sons of their ſupreme Jove*; which makes it ſeem probable, that they had at leaſt ſome *obſcure Notion* amongſt them, that *a Son of the moſt high God was to be ſent from Heaven*, was to *reveal* or be the Interpreter of his Father's Will to Mankind, to be His *Avenger* againſt his Enemies, and the *Deliverer* of Mankind from the Evils which they laboured under, and finally to be their Judge. But as this is meer Conjecture, ſo I lay no Streſs upon it, but leave every Man free to admit or reject it as he pleaſes.

We have therefore now no Occaſion for the Sacrifices of *Bulls and of Goats to take away Sin*, which could never have any Virtue in them to that Purpoſe; nor of any *inferior Beings* (whether Angels or Men) to interceed on our Behalf: Since Chriſt by His *own Blood* has purged away our Sins, and with it has entered into Heaven itſelf, there for ever *to appear in the Preſence of God for us.* The Sacrifices of Beaſts *under the Law* of *Moſes*, and thoſe offered by the Patriarchs and others *before the Law*, might ſerve (and certainly did ſerve) as very proper Shadows of good Things to come; but the Body which was repreſented by thoſe Shadows was only Chriſt. When we find therefore (as we often do in the Books of

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the *New Teſtament*) that *Salvation* and *Forgiveneſs*, *Juſtification*, *Remiſſion*, *blotting out of Sins*, and the like, are aſcribed to *Repentance*, to *confeſſing* and *forſaking Sins*, to *Faith and Charity*, to *Sincerity of Obedience*, and the *Uſe of the holy Sacraments*, or the like, on Man's Part; this is not ſo to be underſtood, as if any of thoſe Things were able to procure ſuch Advantages for us *in virtue of any Merit inherent in themſelves*; but only that theſe are *Conditions*, which God has thought proper to be required on our Part, upon our due Performance of which *He will be pleaſed* to pardon and accept us, *in virtue only of the Merits and Interceſſion* of our Bleſſed Saviour; ſo that *He* alone is the *meritorious Cauſe* of our being ſaved from our Sins, and theſe *the Terms* upon which God now admits us to His Grace and Favour again, inſtead of *that perfect* and *unſinning Obedience*, which was required of us as born under the Law of Nature.

Seeing then all Men *both* Jews *and* Gentiles (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *are concluded under Sin*, as having tranſgreſſed the perfect and compleat Law of their Nature; and conſequently muſt be all of them under Sentence of Condemnation, (ſo far as the Law is concerned) unleſs God pleaſe to take them into his Grace and Favour, and to enter into Terms of a New Covenant with them: And ſeeing it is hardly reconcileable with our *common Reaſon* to believe, that *a juſt and wiſe Law-giver* ſhould, without more ado, forgive the Abuſe of his Law; or that *an infinitely holy and pure God* ſhould admit into His Preſence His polluted and ſinful Creatures, without ſome *Satisfaction made* to His Juſtice and Holineſs, or ſome way ſhewing *His juſt Diſpleaſure* againſt Sin; or that He ſhould come to any new Terms with them, without *ſome one to mediate* or interpoſe on their Behalf: And ſeeing *their own Works and their own Perſons* (as being themſelves ſinful, and conſequently offenſive to Almighty God) could not poſſibly bring this to paſs for them; nor can any Attonement made by the *Blood of others*, nor any Interpoſition of *Men or inferior Spirits*, be in Reaſon aſſigned as ſufficient for bringing about ſuch a great Event: And laſtly, ſeeing *the Law of Nature itſelf* (which Mankind had abuſed and broken) could not poſſibly *ſave* them, becauſe that had already *condemned* them for the Abuſe of it; it will unavoidably follow in point of *plain Reaſon*, either that Mankind muſt be ſtill unhappily under the Sentence of Condemnation, as Breakers of the Law; or if (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *there is now no Condemnation*, (which is really the Caſe) that muſt wholly be owing to the Grace of God *through the Redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus*; and can ariſe from

hence only (unleſs Men can aſſign ſome other Way, either natural or revealed) *becauſe the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus has ſet them free from the Law of Sin and Death* ; and conſequently it is Chriſt Jeſus alone who by His Merits and Interceſſion is the Procurer of this Salvation for us, and *there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men by which we muſt be ſaved.*

In a word, and to ſum up what has been ſaid in ſhort ; The Chriſtian Religion (taken in its greateſt Latitude) lays it down as a fundamental and acknowledged Truth, *That God is* a Being of infinite *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs*, and *Power*, which enabled and enclined Him to *contrive*, *deſign*, and *execute* all his Works in a perfect Manner ; and accordingly, that Man, as he came originally out of the Hands of his Creator, muſt needs have been *perfect in his Kind and Order*, without Sin and without Miſery. In this *primitive State* of Man's Innocence and Perfection, God gave to him a perfect and compleat Law, requiring him to do whatſoever was *fit and proper for a Creature of ſuch a Nature to do*, both with reſpect to *his Creator*, to his *Fellow-creatures*, and *himſelf* or the *Dignity of his own Nature :* And this under the Sanction of having *Life, and continuing for ever in His Favour*, if Man obeyed this Law ; but of *Death, and being excluded for ever from His Divine Preſence*, if he trangreſſed the Precepts of it. And this is what I underſtand by the *Religion* or *Law of Nature*, which every Man, as far as he is Partaker of human Nature, is ſtill (as to the Law itſelf) obliged to obey, and which I will ſuppoſe to be as *perfect*, as *compleat*, and *ſufficient for the End* intended by it (*viz. the preſerving Man's Innocence* according to his Nature, and conſequently his Happineſs) as any one can deſire : And this was Man's *firſt State*, which his wiſe and good Creator provided for him ; and in which if he had continued, he would have been ever happy without wanting any one to ſave him. Man, being a *free Agent*, ſoon made a wrong Uſe of that Liberty and thoſe Faculties which God had given him, tranſgreſſed againſt the Law of his perfect Nature, and thereby involved himſelf in *Sin*, and conſequently in *Death* or *Separation from Almighty God*, the legal Puniſhment of his Sin ; and this is Man's *fallen* or *preſent natural* State, which he ſtands in need of being *ſaved* out of : And in this State he muſt have continued for ever, unleſs ſome Remedy (more than what the Law, as ſuch, could provide) had been found out for him. But God of His Mercy, as ſoon as Man was fallen into theſe unhappy Circumſtances, was Himſelf pleaſed *to find out a Way for him to eſcape*, to enter into the Terms of a *new and gracious Covenant* with him,

him, whereby God engages Himſelf, *in Conſideration* of the Merits and Interceſſion of our Bleſſed Saviour; (who came down from Heaven, and took upon Him our Nature, and in that Nature was made a Sacrifice, for that Purpoſe) and *upon Condition* of certain Duties to be performed on Man's Part (ſuch as *Repentance, Faith, Sincerity of Obedience to the Law* for the Time to come, *the Uſe of certain Ordinances* which he thought proper to appoint as Badges and Seals of this Covenant, and the like, as ſet forth to us in Holy Scripture.) I ſay, God *engages* His Faithfulneſs and Juſtice upon theſe Conditions *to pardon their Tranſgreſſions, and their Sins and Iniquities to remember no more.* And this is the third State of Mankind, *viz.* that *of Grace and Salvation* revealed to us by Jeſus Chriſt, in which we now are *under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation*, as it ſtands in oppoſition to the State of *Sin and Death*, which all Men were involved in *by the Tenour of the Law*, (as having been Breakers of it) and which all muſt continue in as long as they continue in their fallen natural State without Chriſt Jeſus; unleſs theſe Gentlemen, by the Uſe of their clear Reaſon, can diſcover ſome better Way of *being ſaved* from it, (as it will appear they cannot) different from that of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, *whom God has ſet forth* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *to be the Propitiation through Faith in his Blood for the Remiſſion of Sins*; and who has himſelf aſſured us, *That He is the Way, and the Truth and the Life*; or, in other Words, the *true Way that leads Men to Life and Happineſs.*

Rom. iii. 25.

Joh. xiv. 6.

This is a brief, but (I hope) clear Account of the *rational Principles* of that holy Religion, which has now for many Ages been profeſſed amongſt us, and of the different States which Mankind have been in, with relation to their moral or religious Condition: And I defy this Author or any of his Diſciples to ſhew, that there is any thing in it inconſiſtent with the *Nature and Reaſon of Things*, with plain *Fact and the Experience* of all Mankind, or with thoſe *clear Ideas* (to uſe his own Words) *which we have or ought to have of the Divine Being*; or that any of its Doctrines are unworthy of that God, whoſe Character in *Holy Scripture* (our *human Tradition*, as he is ſcornfully pleaſed to call it) as well as in *human Reaſon*, is, to be *perfectly wiſe, infinitely holy, and juſt, and good.* And yet this is the Religion which this Infidel Writer, and ſome others in Conjunction with him, have been of late, and ſtill are endeavouring, with great Induſtry, and greater Malice, (I hope it cannot be added *and too much Encouragement from ſome People)* to pull down and deſtroy, without telling us diſtinctly and

clearly what it is they would ſet up inſtead of it. They ſhelter themſelves indeed under the Covert of the *Law of Nature*, without ſeeming to underſtand that the *Law of Nature*, if they mean by it the Obligation of doing what is *congruous and fitting for Creatures of ſuch a Nature* to do, both with reſpect to *God*, to their *Fellow-Creatures*, and *themſelves*, (which the Chriſtian Revelation expreſſes by *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly* in this preſent World:) If they mean *the loving the Lord our God with all our Hearts* and all our Souls, and our Neighbours as our ſelves, (which they affect to call by the more *genteel Name of Univerſal Benevolence*, becauſe the Scripture ones of *Love* or *Charity* look a little *too Chriſtian:*) or if they mean by it the doing *whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are virtuous, praiſe-worthy, and of good Report:* I ſay, if they mean any of theſe Things by the *Law of Nature*; I defy them to ſhew, that the Obſervation of the Law of Nature in all theſe Senſes is not *more ſtrictly* required of us, and *upon ſtronger Motives*, now under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, which they are endeavouring to deſtroy, than it can poſſibly be upon any of their wild Schemes.

Philip. iv. 8.

This muſt therefore be downright Grimace and (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *ſpeaking Lyes in Hypocriſy*, and can only be deſigned to deceive and lead captive ſome *ſilly* People, or ſome *wicked* ones who have a mind to be led captive by ſuch Pretences. The Law of *Nature*, of *Reaſon*, of *Virtue*, and of *Univerſal Love* or *Benevolence*, is already in full Force *as a Rule of Duty* in the Chriſtian Religion; and I challenge this Writer or any of his Abettors (if they have the Confidence) to ſay the contrary. It is impoſſible therefore *in the Nature of Things* that they ſhould endeavour to pull down the Chriſtian Religion in order to ſet *this* up, which is already *more ſtrongly ſet up* by that Religion than it can be by any other; and they themſelves know that it is ſo. It is to be feared therefore that by the *Law of Nature* they mean ſomething elſe (though they do not think it proper as yet to ſpeak out) *viz.* not the Law of our *perfect*, but of our *imperfect and corrupt Nature*; not of the *Mind*, but of the *Body*; not of *Righteouſneſs*, but of *Sin*; (as St. *Paul* diſtinguiſhes them) *i. e.* following the irregular Appetites and Inclinations, the vicious Luſts and Deſires of our preſent polluted Nature, and (which was evidently meant by *their Forerunner Epicurus* and thoſe of his Sect) *every Man's doing whatever is moſt pleaſing and agreeable to himſelf*,

1 Tim. iv. 2.

ſo

ſo far as it is not ruinous of, and deſtructive to his Being and the main Pleaſure of it: And conſequently they are ſo far from ſetting up *the Law of Nature* in a proper Senſe, (which conſiſts in reſtraining and ſubduing thoſe Appetites) as that they really take away *all Law whatſoever*, and introduce inſtead of it an univerſal Liberty, or rather *Licentiouſneſs*, of every Man's purſuing his own Inclinations, and doing what ſeems *right in his own Eyes:* And the Diſpute is not (as this Writer falſely repreſents it) between Chriſtianity and the Law of Nature, the latter of which is entirely taken into and confirmed by the former; but between Virtue and Vice, Religion and Irreligion, and the Doctrine and Morals of Chriſt and His Apoſtles on the one hand, and that of *Epicurus* and his licentious Followers on the other. And whenever this Author will give us an explicit Delineation of *his Religion of Nature*, I dare ſay that *Fornication* and an unreſtrained Intercourſe of the human Sexes with each other, *more pecudum vivere*; and an indulging the other Appetites and Inclinations of the Body, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the main Pleaſure and Preſervation of it; or, (to uſe his own Expreſſions) *a purſuing that warm Deſire which is implanted in human Nature after ſuch a Manner, as tends moſt to the Happineſs of both the Parties* (which doubtleſs the *Parties* under the Influence of that *warm Deſire* are the moſt proper Judges of:) This, I ſay, I believe will make no ſmall Figure in his Catalogue of *Moral or Religious Duties*, according to *his* Law of Nature. Pag. 345.

It may juſtly be ſuſpected therefore (and, I confeſs, I muſt ſuſpect it, till the Principles or Practices of theſe free-thinking Gentlemen convince me of the contrary) that the Reaſon of their Oppoſition againſt the Chriſtian Religion is, not (as they falſely and inſidiouſly give out) becauſe they would ſet up the *more perfect Law of Nature*; but juſt the Reverſe, *viz.* becauſe the *Law of Nature* is in the higheſt degree eſtabliſhed and *indiſpenſably enjoined in the Chriſtian Religion*, they are for aboliſhing the *Law* of Nature and Chriſtianity together, in order to ſet up an *unbounded Licentiouſneſs*, and a *Liberty of indulging their own vicious Inclinations* (which is what they mean by *following Nature*) in the room of it; and they are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, not becauſe they cannot (in point of *fair Reaſon*) come into it, but becauſe they *have a mind to get rid of it*, as a troubleſome Companion that upbraids them with their Wickedneſs; and there is in them (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) an *evil Heart of Unbelief: Biblia ſacra traducunt*, (ſays the foreign Writer whom I juſt now mentioned) *Urſin* p. 87.

Verbi

Verbi divini miniſtris illudunt, & ſibimet ipſis talem fingunt religionem, qualem forte illorum genius requirit. But it is not my Buſineſs to enquire into the Motives (be that to themſelves and their own Conſciences) upon which theſe Gentlemen have ſuch a profeſſed Diſlike to the Chriſtian Religion; but to ſhew that the Arguments or Objections which are produced by them againſt the Doctrine here mentioned, are but very *vain and trifling*: And this is what I ſhall endeavour to do in the following Diſcourſe.

ACTS

ACTS iv. 12.

Neither is there Salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

III. I NOW proceed (which was propoſed under the *Third* Head) to anſwer the *Cavils* which have been brought by our Adverſaries, and particularly the fore-mentioned Author, againſt the Doctrine here laid down, *viz. Of Mankind's being ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt alone*, and to ſhew the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of *them*. And here I ſhall wholly paſs by unregarded (as really not deſerving any *rational* Man's Notice) all the little *Buffooneries*, ſly *Suggeſtions*, and malicious *Inſinuations* againſt Chriſtianity and its Profeſſors, (more particularly againſt the *Prieſts* of it;) all the violent Outcries againſt *Superſtition* and *Prieſtcraft*, *Creed-making*, *Bigottry*, *Perſecution*, and the like, which we meet with ſo frequently among theſe *Gentlemen of great Benevolence*; and ſhall entirely confine myſelf to the proper Subject now before us, *viz. to anſwer the Arguments, or ſeeming Arguments*, which have been brought more eſpecially by the fore-named Writer: *Firſt*, Againſt the Belief of *any Method at all* of Salvation's being wrought for us; and *Secondly*, Againſt *the particular one here* aſſerted in the Text, *viz.* its being procured by no other than the Merit and Mediation of our Bleſſed Saviour.

Of each of theſe in their Order. And

1. *Firſt*, It is argued by the fore-mentioned Writer (whom I take to be the *Retailer* of the Sentiments and Pleas of the reſt of that Society, who would be thought the only Men that *think with Freedom and Impartiality*,) That the *Law*, or (if you pleaſe) the *Religion* of Nature, is of itſelf *ſufficient*, without any thing elſe, to procure the Happineſs of all Mankind, or *elſe God muſt have been wanting in making Proviſion for that Purpoſe:* And, conſequently, that there is no Occaſion for any *other Saviour*, and that to introduce ſuch an one is *ſuperſtitious and vain:* And he more than once hints

(though he does not care to ſpeak out,) that it is *this* which properly diſtinguiſhes Religion from downright *Superſtition*; that the *former* relies upon the perfect Law of Nature, as *ſufficient of itſelf* to make all Men happy; whereas the *latter* (as if Nature had not ſufficiently provided) was always putting Men upon contriving of other Saviours, and other Methods for obtaining the ſame End: So that *Chriſtianity, or the Belief of being ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt*, or indeed by any other than the *Religion or Law of Nature*, is all at once rejected as a piece of *Vanity and Superſtition*. This is the Ground of that common Outcry, which among ſome People it is thought *genteel and faſhionable* to make againſt *Superſtition*; but ſuch a Ground as no Man would venture to build his Salvation upon, nor indeed any thing elſe but a Fool's Paradiſe. In order to diſcover the great Weakneſs of this *Cavil*, we need only obſerve (as was done in the former Diſcourſe) *That as every Law*, in the Nature of the thing, *muſt abſolve and juſtify* in the ſight of the Lawgiver thoſe who have *obſerved and lived up to* the Precepts of it; ſo every one, on the contrary, that has a Penalty annexed to it, muſt *condemn and conſign to Puniſhment* (without the Intervention of ſome *Grace and Mercy*, which are Things foreign to the Law) thoſe who *have tranſgreſſed and broke through* its Rules.

Suppoſing therefore the Law of Nature to be as *ſufficient* for procuring the Happineſs of all Mankind as theſe Gentlemen would have it; I ſhould be glad to know of them, whether they mean the Law of Nature *obſerved*, or the Law of Nature *broken: If they mean the former*, viz. *That the Law of Nature, which God gave Man at the Creation*, had it been duly obſerved by Man, *was ſufficient of itſelf, without any other Addition, to attain the End mentioned*; they ſay no more than what all the World allow: Since it is univerſally acknowledged, *That if Man had continued to live without Sin according to the Law*, he would have continued to live in the Favour of God, and conſequently would have been happy, and not have needed any Saviour; ſo that the Law in that Caſe would not only have been *ſufficient*, but *effectual* to that End; and all our Author's Pains to ſhew the *Excellency and Sufficiency* of the Law of Nature, is only a downright Miſtake of the *Point in queſtion*, and nothing at all to the purpoſe, unleſs it be to make his unwary Followers believe, that Chriſtianity is an Enemy to Mankind's being governed by the Law of Nature and Reaſon; whereas Chriſtianity enforces it to the higheſt Degree, but only ſays, *That Mankind have tranſgreſſed this perfect Law*, and therefore muſt ſtand in need of *being pardoned* for ſuch their Tranſgreſſion; and *that it is Chriſt*

alone

alone who has procured this Pardon from God the Author of the Law. *If they mean the* latter, *viz. That the Law of Nature, though tranſgreſſed by Mankind, yet was ſtill ſufficient*, without any other Means, to procure their Happineſs; they ſay what no Man ever ſaid or thought before them; ſince all the World agree, that a Law as ſuch muſt bring under Condemnation, and conſequently ſubject to its Penalty, thoſe who are guilty of tranſgreſſing the Rules of it: Not that in this Caſe, any want of *Sufficiency to make Men happy* can be charged upon the *Law* or upon *God the Author of it*, (as this Writer often argues;) but the *End intended* by the Law is in effect not obtained, through ſome Deficiency or Fault of *thoſe who were ſubject to it.*

To illuſtrate this by a familiar Inſtance or two: Suppoſe a Father, upon ſetting out his Son into the World, to lay down to him the *wiſeſt and beſt Rules imaginable* for the Conduct of his Life, and to make him *ſuch an Allowance as ſhould be every way ſufficient* for his handſome Maintenance in his Place and Station; if the Son afterwards, by his Folly and Indiſcretion, breaks through theſe *wiſe Rules*, and out-ſpends this *full Allowance*, he may eaſily bring himſelf (notwithſtanding the wiſe and prudent Care of his Father) into Debt and a Priſon: Here no one would ſay, but that the Father had done what was *every way ſufficient and proper* to be done on *his* Part; and no rational Man would argue (as this Author does in ſeveral Places) If the Son by *his own Folly* has brought himſelf into ill Circumſtances, that therefore *there muſt have been an undeniable Default in the Giver of this Advice and Allowance to him*, (they are our Author's own Words) *in appointing Means not ſufficient to anſwer their deſigned Ends.* Pag. 378. Again, Suppoſe a Member (or Members) of any of *our Societies*, which were eſtabliſhed for the Promotion of *Religion, Learning, and Virtue* in the World, after many Years eating his Founder's Bread, ſhould appear neither *religious, nor learned, nor virtuous*; there *muſt have been indeed an undeniable Default* ſomewhere or another: But muſt that Default therefore (I appeal to this Writer) be laid upon the Founders, for *appointing Means not ſufficient to anſwer their deſigned Ends?* or ought it not much rather to be laid upon the unworthy Party, who have made an *ill Uſe of the proper Means* that *were* appointed. The Application of both is too obvious to ſtand in need of any thing further's being ſaid about it.

I would obſerve therefore, that the Word *ſufficient* is commonly taken in two different Senſes; ſometimes for that which *is effectually* ſo, and ſometimes for that which is *only ſo in the Nature of*

things,

things, but the Effect is by ſome Means or another hindered: And accordingly when it is argued (as it often is by theſe Gentlemen) that if the Law of Nature is not *ſufficient of itſelf* to procure Man's Happineſs, it will follow that *God has not ſufficiently provided by Nature* for the Happineſs of all his Creatures; the Anſwer is very eaſy, *viz. That the Law of Nature was of itſelf ſufficient*; and *God did ſufficiently provide on His Part* for the Happineſs of them all; ſo that no Defect can juſtly be charged upon *His* Side: But His *ſufficient Proviſion* may be rendered (though we cannot ſay properly *inſufficient*, yet) *ineffectually ſufficient* by a Fault juſtly chargeable on the Side of ſome of them. And this is really the preſent Caſe; God gave Man a Law at his firſt Creation *duly fitted and ſuited to his reaſonable Nature*, and every way *ſufficient* (had it been followed at it ought to have been) to make him *effectually happy*: But Man has *abuſed and tranſgreſſed this Law*, and thereby rendered it only *ineffectually ſufficient* for the intended Purpoſe; and ſomething further muſt now be neceſſary in order to the *effectually* producing the ſame End, or elſe Mankind (by *their own Fault* indeed, and not the *Law*'s) will be left fallen ſhort of their State of Happineſs. I would deſire the forementioned Writer therefore to give me a fair Anſwer to the following ſhort Queſtion, *viz.* Whether the *Bulk of Mankind* (as he is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf) *Jews and Heathens*, *Chriſtians and Mahometans*, have ſinned and do ſin againſt the original, *unvariably perfect* Law of Nature, or not? If he anſwers *Not*, (as I think *he ought to do* according to his Principles, and I dare ſay *would do* if he thought it proper to ſpeak out,) this is not only contrary to the expreſs Declarations of Holy Scripture (which he has no Regard for,) but to the *Experience*, the *Sentiments*, and the *Complaints* of all Men (as far as we know) in all Ages of the World, who have always talked (as was obſerved in my late Diſcourſe) of *Mankind's having run headlong* into all manner of Wickedneſs, of the primitive *Golden Age's being turned into an Iron one*, and the like; and among whom it was always a Queſtion, *How ſo much Evil ſhould get into* the World, conſidering the Goodneſs and Perfection of God? But it never was any Queſtion, *Whether it was in the World, or no?* If he anſwer, *That Mankind have been guilty of Sin*; it will follow, that then they muſt be under Condemnation by virtue of the *Law as ſuch*, and the greater Condemnation the more compleat and ſufficient the Law was for their Happineſs; and conſequently muſt neceſſarily be in want of ſomething elſe *over and above the Law of Nature* (*viz.* of Grace and Mercy) *to ſave them* from that Condem-

Condemnation : And *the Method of doing this* is what the Chriſtian Religion informs us of ; this is that *Life* and Immortality which *through* our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt is brought to light to us by the Goſpel, and what the fore-mentioned Writer is pleaſed to *brand* with the Name of *a Load of Superſtition*, and *an inſupportable Burden which Superſtition has laid Men under*, without one *Tittle* of Argument to prove that it *is* ſo. Pag. 8. Pag. 366.

2. But this Writer further argues, *Secondly*, That ſeeing the *Law*, or *Religion*, of Nature (as coming from God Himſelf) muſt needs be *compleat and perfect*, it is impoſſible that any thing further ſhould be *added* to it : And therefore *the Chriſtian Religion can be no other than that of Nature*, or rather (which is his Meaning in other Words) *there can be no Chriſtian Religion at all, but only Natural* ; ſince that which is already *perfect* is not capable of any Addition. This, I believe, is the Author's favourite Argument, ſince he is very frequent in the Repetition of it, in order to its making the more deep Impreſſion upon the Minds of his ſimple and unwary Readers. The Anſwer to it is very eaſy and obvious, *viz.* That *ſuppoſing the Perfection* of the Religion or Law of Nature, it will follow that nothing could afterwards be added to it *as a Part or Appendix of the ſame ſort and kind, to ſupply any Deficiencies that had been found in it* ; for this would be apparently an Impeachment of its *Perfection :* But that *after the perfect Law* of Nature had done its Duty, *all that a Law could do* ; and Mankind, by ſinning againſt ſuch *a perfect Law*, had made themſelves *exceeding ſinful*, incurred its Penalty, and were thereby deprived of the Acceptance of God and their own Happineſs ; that *after this* (I ſay) no additional Method could be *found out* by God Himſelf, in order to ſave them from this Condemnation, (*viz.* a *Method of Grace and Favour*, entirely foreign to, and diſtinct from the Law) without accuſing the Law of ſome Defect or Imperfection on its Part ; this is altogether *unreaſonably and abſurdly imagined* ; ſince in this Caſe the Defect will lie wholly on the Part of *thoſe, who have broken the Law*, and not upon the Law itſelf, *which has been broken by them :* For is any Law, *as a Rule of Conduct and Behaviour*, to be eſteemed the leſs perfect, becauſe ſome People will fooliſhly or perverſely diſobey its Precepts, and thereby involve themſelves in the Inconveniencies that muſt follow upon ſuch their Diſobedience ? Or is it any Reflection upon the *Compleatneſs of the Law itſelf*, or the *Wiſdom of its Maker*, or any Addition to it for a Supply of its Defects, if ſome *other Ways and Means* are afterwards reſolved upon, in order to ſave from ſuch Inconveniences thoſe that have

incurred them ? Were the Father's Advice and Allowance to his Son (that I may continue in the Illuſtration before mentioned) ever the leſs *perfect and compleat in themſelves*, becauſe the Son took no care to behave himſelf according to them, and has thereby brought himſelf into Debt and a Priſon ? or if the Father afterwards, out of Love and Compaſſion to him, ſhall *deliver him from theſe Circumſtances upon certain Conditions* which he thinks fit to preſcribe to him, is this properly *any Addition* to his former wiſe Methods which he had taken with his Son, *in order to ſupply their Deficiency ?* Or is it an *entirely new Agreement*, a Method of Love and Favour which he is willing to uſe toward his Son, without any Impeachment of the Goodneſs and *Perfection* of what he had formerly done for him, and which his Son's Indiſcretion only had rendered ineffectual.

To illuſtrate this Matter ſtill a little further, let us conſider impartially how it is amongſt ourſelves : Let us ſuppoſe the *Law of our own Nation* to be as *perfect* and *compleat* as it is poſſible for any thing of that kind to be ; and a Number of Perſons notwithſtanding to have tranſgreſſed it, and by ſuch their Tranſgreſſion to be *brought under Sentence of Condemnation :* Here if any Perſon of Authority and Intereſt ſhould *interpoſe* in their Behalf, and the King ſhould *grant, and actually ſign their Pardon*, upon *certain Conditions* which he thinks proper to inſiſt upon ; as that of tranſporting themſelves (for Inſtance) into ſome of the Plantations, or the like : Would any one (nay, would this Author himſelf) ſay, *That this was* a Clauſe ſuperadded to correct the Imperfection of the Law ? Or would he not rather ſay, *That this was* an Act of Grace and Mercy, not *added to the Law* as if it wanted ſomething to perfect it ; but only *coming after the Law* to bring about an Event, which the Law itſelf, in the Nature of the thing, (if People would be ſo fooliſh as to be guilty of the Breach of it, and incurr its Penalty) could not poſſibly bring about ? For the *perfect and compleat Law* is ſuppoſed to have *condemned* theſe Criminals, and therefore as ſuch could not *ſave them from ſuch Condemnation* ; but *that* muſt be effected (if ever it is effected) by ſome other Means, *viz.* thoſe of Grace and Favour. To apply this to our preſent Purpoſe : I will ſuppoſe the Law, or Religion, of Nature to have been *abſolutely perfect and compleat* as a Rule of Action : I will ſuppoſe too, (till this Author is pleaſed to deny it) that Mankind in general, and each Man in particular, *have ſinned and do ſin* againſt the Precepts of this perfect Law ; and conſequently (if they have nothing elſe but the Law to depend upon) muſt be under Condemnation,

demnation, and liable to be deprived of the *Acceptance of God* and the *Happineſs of* their Nature, which were the End of the Law. If God then afterwards, *by an Act of Grace and Mercy*, and in Conſideration of the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be pleaſed to ſuſpend or remit this Penalty, and to *ſave them from this Condemnation* to which they were ſubject by the Law; is it common Senſe and Reaſon for any Man hence to argue, *That if this were ſo, the Law muſt needs have been imperfect?* or that God by His Law had *not ſufficiently* provided for the Happineſs of all His Creatures? Certainly no; but the Concluſion that we ought to make is, (give me leave to repeat what I have already often mentioned) That though the Law was *holy, and juſt, and good*, yet Man, by the wrong Uſe which he made of his Liberty, had tranſgreſſed this *perfect* Law; and the Law as ſuch, *in the Nature and Reaſon of Things*, could do no other than *condemn* him; and therefore ſomething further (*viz. Grace and Mercy*, which are Things *different from the Law*, and which the Law as ſuch, though never ſo perfect, could not poſſibly procure) muſt be *abſolutely neceſſary* in order to *ſave* him, or elſe he muſt for ever lie *under this Condemnation*.

3. But, *Thirdly*, this Author endeavours by another Argument to ſhew, that the Chriſtian Religion (which, by way of Contempt, he is pleaſed often to join with *Mahometan and Pagan*, and to call them all alike ſcornfully by the Name of *traditional Religion*) cannot poſſibly add any thing, and conſequently not Terms of Forgiveneſs and Pardon, to the Religion or Law of Nature: *viz. Becauſe they have both of them the ſame End*, and conſequently muſt both of them preſcribe the ſame *Means* for the Attainment of it. And therefore nothing by the one can be ſuperadded to the other, ſince they are the ſame both as to the *End* and the *Means* for attaining that End. That the Religion *of Nature*, and that of *Chriſt Jeſus*, have both the ſame *ultimate End* (*viz.* the *Glory of God* and *Happineſs of Mankind*) I readily acknowledge; but that they have both the ſame *immediate or ſubordinate End*, I can by no means allow; *that* of the former being evidently *to preſerve Mankind* (by giving them a perfect Rule of Duty) *in their natural State* of Innocence and Happineſs, wherein they were created; and that of the latter, *to deliver them from a preternatural State* of Sin and Miſery, into which they had brought themſelves by tranſgreſſing the Rule of Nature; *that* of the former, to preſerve Health *from being loſt*; and *that* of the latter, to reſtore it again *after it had been loſt*: And therefore to affirm, *that the latter cannot poſſibly add any thing to the former*,

former, is juſt as reaſonable as to ſay, *that when a Phyſician has* given a *perfectly good Sett of Rules* to any Friend of his for the *Preſervation* of his Health, which is exactly ſuited to his Temper and Conſtitution ; if that Friend afterwards (through a Neglect of thoſe Rules) ſhould fall into a dangerous Illneſs, he muſt not by any Means preſcribe any thing elſe for the *Recovery* of his Health, without diſcovering the Imperfection of his former Rules given for the Preſervation of it ; ſince the End of both Preſcriptions being the ſame, *Health*, the Means of obtaining it muſt be the ſame in both, and nothing new could be added by the latter to the former, if it were perfect in its kind ; ſince that which is *perfect* can admit of no Addition ; and conſequently, in his Friend's Illneſs, he can preſcribe *nothing new* for the Removal of it, but only make *a Republication of the ſame excellent Rules*, which he had before laid down to preſerve him from ſuch a State of Illneſs.

If therefore by the Law of Nature's being *abſolutely perfect* this Author means, that it *wanted no Part or Degree of Excellence*, that could poſſibly be required in a Law or Rule of Duty, which was exactly fitted to the then Conſtitution of Man's Nature, and deſigned and given for the Preſervation of his Innocence, in order to his final Happineſs ; I readily come into it : But if he means, that it was *ſo abſolutely perfect*, as that, when it was broke, there could be no new Covenant, nor any *new Conditions of pardoning and forgiving the Breach of it afterwards*, in order to reſtore Man to his loſt Happineſs ; this I *abſolutely* deny. Perhaps this Author will ſay (as he ſeems to do in ſeveral Places) *that whatever tends any way to* the Happineſs of Mankind, (and conſequently this New Covenant of *Pardon and Forgiveneſs*, if ever there was ſuch a thing) is comprehended within his Notion of the *Law of Nature*, as a *Superſtructure* belonging to it. Not to diſpute at preſent about the Largeneſs of his Notion of the *Law of Nature*, in making it extend to a State which is wholly preternatural, *viz. that of Sin and Guilt* ; I ſhall only obſerve, That it is odd enough to hear a Man, who had juſt been arguing for the *Perfection* and *abſolute Perfection* of the Law of Nature, which was given to Man at his firſt Creation, before he had ſinned, and which was *then unchangeably perfect* ; now talking, as he does, of a *Superſtructure* belonging to it after Sin had been committed. This perfect Law therefore (it ſeems) of Nature, though *uncapable of* having any Addition or Alteration, yet may admit of a *Superſtructure*. When this Writer explains what he means by a Superſtructure, which *makes neither Alteration nor Addition to the Building which it is a*

Pag. 69.

Super-

Superſtructure to, and which was before perfect, I will promiſe him to conſider a little further of this Evaſion; but till then, I freely own it is ſomewhat above my Comprehenſion. But a Man that can make Senſe of *Chriſtian Deiſts*, (*i. e.* Chriſtians who *refuſe to acknowledge Chriſt*,) as this Author often talks, may (I confeſs) make Senſe of any thing; and by Dint of ſuch clear Ideas as he is Maſter of, may as truly call himſelf a *Proteſtant Papiſt*, and talk juſt as intelligibly of *black Snow*, and a *Sun that has neither Warmth nor Brightneſs*, and of *Superſtructures to perfect Buildings* that neither *alter nor add to them*.

4. But this Author further argues againſt the Chriſtian Religion, *Fourthly*, That, *ſuppoſing the Law itſelf*, though never ſo perfect, *could not* pardon and juſtify thoſe who for their Sins were ſubject to its Condemnation; yet ſtill there was no occaſion for any Propitiation or Interceſſion (as the Chriſtian Revelation teaches,) ſince *God is enclined*, nay, and *under an Obligation*, as a tender Father of all His Children, of His own free Goodneſs (without inſiſting upon any thing of that Nature) to pardon all their Sins and paſs by their Tranſgreſſions; and *He certainly will* do ſo. That theſe Men ſhould pretend by the bare Light of Reaſon to know all that is required by the *Law of Nature and Reaſon*, or (in the Author's Words) *That every intelligent Creature ſhould have ſufficient Underſtanding to diſcover thoſe Duties which Mens Relation to God and one another requires of them*, appears ſomething plauſible; but that they ſhould preſume by the Light of human Reaſon to direct God Himſelf, and to determine what He *will* do or is *obliged* to do, in the Exerciſe of His vindictive Juſtice, or the Manifeſtation of His Mercy, when they have tranſgreſſed *that Law*, is really Inſolence intolerable. The learned *Pufendorf*, (as good an Authority as Mr. *Nye*, or any other whom this Author has produced) expreſly tells us, *That how God will do* in the Execution of his vindictive Juſtice, *ſupra noſtrum eſt captum*; but theſe Men imagine that nothing is too high for their *Capacities*, and ſet up human Reaſon not only to be a Judge of what is fit and proper for *Man* to do, but to decide upon the Proceedings of *God Himſelf*, and are as confident of what He *will do* or *not do* in the Diſtribution of His Juſtice and Mercy, as if they were fully acquainted with the Mind of the Lord, and were admitted into the Number of his Privy-Counſellors. Pag. 29.

But to return an Anſwer to this Argument in Form: That God is a Being *infinitely gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering and of great Goodneſs, that pardoneth Sins, and paſſeth by Tranſgreſſions*, is readily acknowledged both from Scripture-Revelation, and thoſe common

Notions which all the World conceive of the Divine Nature ; and accordingly Chriſtianity is nothing elſe but the *Method of God's pardoning and forgiving Sins by Jeſus Chriſt :* But it is difficult to imagine that an *infinitely wiſe Governour* (ſuch as God is acknowledged on all Hands to be) ſhould eſtabliſh a Law at one time by his own Authority, (as this Author allows Him to have done) the Penalty of the Breach of which was Death and Excluſion from His Favour and Acceptance ; and yet as ſoon as it was broken ſhould remit that Penalty, and without any Conſideration (but only moved by his meer Goodneſs and Compaſſion) ſhould admit the Breakers of it into His Favour again : And I cannot well ſee how ſuch a Conduct as this is, can be fairly reconciled with that *Invariableneſs and Immutability of the Divine Nature and Law*, which upon other Occaſions this Author lays ſuch a mighty Streſs upon. But there are *other Attributes* belonging to the Divine Nature beſide the ſingle one of *Mercy* ; and though *this* ſhould be allowed (as ſome are pleaſed to expreſs it) to be the *favourite* one ; yet it cannot be imagined, in point of meer Reaſon, that God ſhould be ſo influenced in *partial* Favour of any one of his Attributes, as to deny Himſelf, and do Violence to ſeveral others, which are plainly as eſſential to His Divine Nature as *that*. If *Mercy rejoyced againſt Judgment* in God's Willingneſs to forgive Mens Sins, yet ſurely we cannot conceive that He ſhould do it wholly without Judgment. And if we conſider Him either as *an unchangeably wiſe and juſt Legiſlator*, or as *an infinitely holy and pure Being*, we cannot in reaſon imagine, that (in the *former* of thoſe Capacities) He could remit the Puniſhment of the Breach of His own Law, without at leaſt *ſome Satisfaction* ; or (in the *latter*) that, without *ſome Propitiation made for Sin*, He could accept and admit again into His Divine Preſence thoſe who were ſtained and polluted with the Guilt of it. Now *Repentance* and *Reſolutions of better Obedience* for the future, and even that *better Obedience itſelf*, are no more than doing our Duty according to the Tenour of the Law for the *Time to come* ; but make no amends, and give no Satisfaction to the Juſtice of the Law-giver, for the *Tranſgreſſions paſt :* And therefore it is but reaſonable and juſt to conclude, (and *that* from the very Nature and Reaſon of Things themſelves) that God granted His gracious Pardon upon certain *Terms and Conditions*, and had ſome *Satisfaction* made to His Juſtice and Holineſs, in conſideration whereof He enters into a New Covenant with Mankind, whereby He engages Himſelf (on their Performance of thoſe Conditions) *to be gracious unto them, and their Sins and Iniquities to remember no more.*

Thus

Thus far Reaſon (meer *human Reaſon)* may be ſuppoſed to go by its own native Light; but *what Terms in particular* the moſt Holy and wiſe God will be pleaſed to inſiſt upon, before He executes this Covenant; and what *particular Duties* He will require on our Part, as *Conditions of our being pardoned aed reſtored to His Favour*; this *human Reaſon* can never he a competent Judge of, without the *additional Help of Revelation* to aſſiſt it: In order to know *the Articles* upon which the Treaty was entered into, it muſt be neceſſary to have *Recourſe to the Treaty itſelf.*

And further, as Man, who was the *condemned Party, and ſhut up under Sin*, cannot eaſily be imagined to have been able to tranſact this Affair in his own Behalf; ſo it is reaſonable to believe, that it was brought about by the *Mediation and Interceſſion* of ſome other; and as no other Perſon can, with any Shew of Reaſon, be aſſign'd for this Purpoſe, ſo moſt probably by *Jeſus Chriſt* the Son of the offended God, whom *Revelation* has expreſly declared to be that Perſon, and who is therefore ſtyled in Holy Scripture *the Mediator of a new and better Covenant, and the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* We have this Advantage therefore in *the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt*, over and above what this Writer and his deluded Followers do or can pretend to under *that of meer Nature*; That they, when they have ſinned, (as I ſuppoſe he will allow me that he and all Men have done) have nothing elſe to rely upon for their final Happineſs, but the *ſingle* Attribute of God's *uncovenanted Mercy*; and this in Contradiction (as far at leaſt as appears to our Reaſon) to His *immutable Juſtice and Holineſs:* Whereas we (ſuppoſing that the Chriſtian Covenant ſhould at laſt prove a Miſtake, as there is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe) have as good Ground to hope in the *Mercy* of God for our Pardon and Forgiveneſs, as they can poſſibly have; and ſo far are fully upon a Level with them; and have beſide (ſuppoſing our Religion to be true) the unſhaken Foundation of His *covenanted Faithfulneſs and Juſtice* to rely upon, that He will *forgive us our Sins, and cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs:* So that whereas their Salvation and Happineſs for ever depends upon only one ſingle Thread, ours is ſecured to us by a *three fold Cord*, which (as the wiſe Man expreſſes it) *is not quickly broken*; and therefore in common Prudence and meer human Diſcretion, (if there were nothing elſe in it) the Chriſtian Religion is as much preferable to that of Nature, (which is all that theſe Gentlemen any of them pretend to, and it were to be wiſhed that they were hearty and ſincere even in *that)* as it is more eligible to have three than only one Place of Refuge to fly to in caſe of Danger. And ſo much

much may ſuffice for an Anſwer to the Arguments, or pretended Arguments, which have been brought by this Writer againſt the Reaſonableneſs of believing *any Salvation's being* procured for us, which was the *firſt* Thing propoſed under this general Head. I now proceed to the Second, which was

2. *Secondly*, To anſwer what he has objected againſt the *particular Method of it* here aſſerted in the Text, *viz.* Its being procured by *no other than the Merit and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt*. And here he argues, 1*ſt*, That if Salvation be attainable by *Jeſus Chriſt alone*, Mankind muſt have been left for above 4000 Years, (he means from the Time of Sin's entring into the World to our Saviour's Appearance) *without any Poſſibility* of attaining Salvation; which is ſo irreconcileable with the Notions that we have of the Goodneſs and other Attributes of the Divine Nature, as that it cannot be believed. ---This Argument (which ſeems by his frequent Repetition of it to be another of his chief Favourites) is evidently founded upon a falſe Suppoſition, *viz. That the Sacrifice and Expiation of our Saviour's Blood could be of no Avail in the Sight of God toward His forgiving Man's Tranſgreſſion, till the Time of His actual Appearance in the World:* For if that Sacrifice, in its Virtue and Efficacy, was applicable to all Men in all Ages of the World, as well thoſe who had gone before, as thoſe who followed after, the full Time of our Saviour's coming; then this Argument muſt fall to the Ground of Courſe, and Mankind will be ſo far from being excluded from Salvation *for above* 4000 *Years*, (as this Author argues) as that all will have been capable of it (tho' not by the Merit of their own Works, yet by the Virtue and Efficacy of this one great Sacrifice) from the Time of Sin's firſt Entrance into the World, down to this very Day. And that this is really the Caſe, appears evident both from the *Nature of ſuch Sacrifices*, which were always looked upon as Propitiations and Attonements for Sins that were *paſt*, as well as from the Authority of Holy Scripture, where (beſide the Promiſe made immediately after the Fall, of *the Seed of the Woman's bruiſing the Serpent's Head*) the Sufferings and Propitiation of Chriſt, in the Merit of them, are repreſented as extending themſelves *to all that have ſinned*, to the *Sins of the World*, and of *all Mankind* without Exception; and the *Life purchaſed by Chriſt* is made as comprehenſive of all, as the *Death* brought into the World by the Sin of our firſt Parents, and the Continuation of it in their Poſterity afterwards, came alike upon all: And St. *Paul* expreſly tells us, That tho' this Grace is *now made manifeſt* by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who has aboliſhed Death,

2 Tim. i. 9. 10.

and

and brought Life and Immortality to Light, through the Goſpel; yet that it was *given us in Him before the World began:* And this, I ſuppoſe, may be the Reaſon of our Saviour's being deſcribed by *the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World.* And accordingly this Doctrine, with very little Variation, has been unanimouſly received and acknowledged by all Chriſtians, and our Saviour (as the Author of Salvation for us by the *Sacrifice of Himſelf*) is uſually repreſented as the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, which diffuſes its healing Influence both backward and forward, and warms and cheriſhes with its enlivening Rays the Generations paſt as well as thoſe to come. If our Author *did not know this*, and *other Points* of our Religion, which he has baſely miſrepreſented; he ſhould be *taught* however to underſtand a Subject (eſpecially one of that Importance) before he writes againſt it, and takes Occaſion from his own Ignorance and Blundering to abuſe and vilify it, leaſt he ſhould fall under the Character of that worſt Sort of Fools, *qui damnant quod non intelligunt:* If he *did know* this, and yet made ſuch an Objection againſt Chriſtianity in order to deceive ſome unwary People, and increaſe the Number of his own Diſciples and Followers; he deſerves a worſe Name, which I do not care to give any Man in this Place: But really there appears to be ſo much of *the Fool* and of *ſomething elſe* in this Author's Writings, as that it is hard to ſay which of the two Ingredients is predominant in his Conſtitution.

Rev. xiii. 8.

But he proceeds further and argues, 2*dly*, That if God intended that all Men ſhould be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt alone, He would certainly, out of his Juſtice and Goodneſs, have brought all Men to the Knowledge of, and Belief in Him; or at leaſt would have afforded them the Opportunities of it: Whereas it is plain, on the contrary, that not only thoſe who lived *before his coming*, but a great Part of Mankind *now at this Day*, are left wholly deſtitute of any ordinary Means of ſuch Knowledge and Belief; and conſequently (if this Doctrine be allowed to be true) muſt be deprived of the very Means and Poſſibility of Salvation.--This Objection too, as well as the former, is plainly built upon a Suppoſition, which is far from being neceſſary, and which, I believe, upon Examination will hardly be found to be true, *viz. That the Merits of our Saviour* for the Salvation of Mankind, (by Virtue of which He is ſtyled the *Saviour of the World*) can be applied to thoſe only, who have an *explicite Knowledge* of and Belief in Him; for it will by no Means follow upon any other Suppoſition, That if God will have all Men to be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt, and no other Way; therefore all muſt be brought to the Knowledge of and Faith in Him.

For the better understanding of this, give me Leave to observe, That the whole Oeconomy of our Salvation by Jesus Christ may be considered by us under two different Lights, either as *an Act of Grace and Favour only* on the Part of God ; or, as *a Covenant* requiring such and such Conditions to be performed on Man's Part, upon his Performance of which God has promised and engaged Himself to shew him that Grace and Favour. Of these Conditions, (or *Means of obtaining Grace) Faith in, and confessing of, Jesus Christ our Lord*, are undeniably some of the Principal, and accordingly necessary to any Man's having a *legal and covenanted* Title to that Life and Salvation, which in that Covenant is stipulated by Jesus Christ. Those therefore who do not, or cannot arrive at the Performance of these, or other Conditions of the Covenant, cannot challenge indeed the *Faithfulness and Justice* of God, nor claim Life as *due* to them in Virtue of a Covenant which they are not admitted into ; (and this, I suppose, may have been really the Meaning of those Divines, who deny *Salvation to all* indiscriminately who are out of the Pale of the Church, meaning *Covenanted Salvation*, it being their Business only to explain the Conditions of the *Christian Covenant)* but that therefore all those who are out of the Covenant, *(and unavoidably so)* are excluded from all Manner and Degree of *Salvation*, and cannot by any Endeavours in the Ways of Virtue and Religion, according to the best of their rational Powers, and the best Use of those Means and Opportunities which God has afforded them, be so much as proper Objects of his *uncovenanted Grace and Mercy*, and have their Sins forgiven them in Virtue of *that Sacrifice* which our Saviour made of Himself to take away Mens Sins : This is what I confess I can see no Necessity for, nor can I conceive such a Notion to do any Honour to the Merit of our Saviour's Sacrifice in the Sight of God ; since every thing that is valued for its Goodness, and contributing to the Happiness of Mankind, (and consequently *this Sacrifice)* is always to be esteemed either more or less valuable in Proportion to its greater or lesser Diffusiveness.

In short, how God will deal with those who have had the Gospel *Covenant* abundantly proposed to them, is sufficiently plain from the Revelation of His Will as contained in the New Testament ; but what he will do out of His *uncovenanted Mercy*, in Consideration of Christ's Sacrifice, with those to whom he has not vouchsafed these Opportunities, neither I, nor this Author, nor any other Person living, has any Right to determine. These are *secret Things of God, which belong to God alone* ; whereas *the Things that*

are

are revealed, only belong to us and our Children. He may ſhew his Juſtice and Mercy to his Creatures in a thouſand different Ways, and a thouſand different Degrees, which are to us unknown, and *muſt always be ſo*, unleſs he pleaſe to reveal them to us; and *one cannot without Horror* (as this Author elſewhere expreſſes it) *think of impious Wretches breaking through all Rules of Modeſty, to ſet up for Standards of Truth for God as well as Man. We cannot find the Depth of the Heart of Man*, (as it is well expreſſed in the Apochryphal Book of *Judith*) *neither can we perceive the Things which he thinketh; how then can we ſearch out God who has made all theſe Things, and know his Mind or comprehend his Purpoſe?* Thus much however we are ſure of in general, that the Judge of all the Earth will do nothing but what is right by any of his Creatures; and though *His Ways may not be as our Ways, nor his Thoughts as our Thoughts*, yet we know that *He will judge the World in Righteouſneſs*, (as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it) *and miniſter true Judgment unto the People.* In the mean time it highly concerns all of us, to whom God has vouchſafed the Revelation of his Will, and afforded the Means of Grace, and Opportunities of being admitted into the New Covenant, to take care that we do not, out of any corrupt Principle, *reject the Counſel of God againſt ourſelves*; that there be not in any of us *an Evil Heart of Unbelief to depart from the living God:* For though we do not know (ſince he has no where told us) how God will deal with thoſe who have not had theſe Advantages; yet we *do* know, both from the Reaſon of the Thing, and the expreſs Teſtimony of Scripture, *That the Servant who did know his Maſter's Will*, (and the ſame is true of thoſe who *might* and *ought* to have known it) *and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to His Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* Whatever may be the Condition of the *Pagan* World, whoſe Ears were never reached by the Sound of the Goſpel; their Condition certainly is in the higheſt Degree dangerous, who have *made themſelves Pagans*, and renounce the Faith in, and Hope of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, *even in the midſt of Chriſtianity.*

Ch. viii. ver. 14.

Pſal. ix. 8.

3*dly*, I ſhall take Notice only of one *Objection* (or rather *Cavil*) more, which I meet with in our Author againſt *this particular Method of Salvation*, by the Sacrifice and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, *viz. That God never took any Delight* at all in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices, (which, in his declaiming way, he calls *burning the Harmleſs and Innocent to ſave the Hurtful*;) and conſequently much leſs could He be delighted with, and accept of, the Sacrifice of his own Son in our Nature; and that the Notion of applying ourſelves to God by a Me-

a Mediator, muſt denote, that *either God muſt be ignorant* of ſomething, which this Mediator is to ſuggeſt to Him ; or *that He muſt be unwilling* to do ſomething, which this Mediator by His Importunities is to prevail upon Him to do againſt His Will ; and ſo neceſſarily ſuppoſes God either to be *ignorant*, or *weak*, or *not ſo ready and willing* as he might be of Himſelf to do Good to His Creatures.-- That God never took any Delight in thoſe Things *for their own Sakes*, or upon account of any Virtue or Excellency in themſelves ; nay, that he expreſſed a downright Diſlike to them, when they were either *offered with polluted Hands*, or *Men depended too much* upon their Virtue and Efficacy, or the like ; I readily acknowledge : But that therefore he did not like them, as they were ſuch proper Acknowledgments as Men were able to make of their *Dependance* upon Him, and *Thankfulneſs* to Him as the Giver and Beſtower of all upon them ; *as expreſſive* of their being ſenſible that they had tranſgreſſed his Laws, and deſerved that Death in their own Perſons, which was repreſented by the Death of ſome of thoſe Creatures which He had given them ; or *as Figures and Repreſentations* of that one great Sacrifice of our Bleſſed Saviour, which was *ordained* indeed before the Foundation of the World, but was to *be actually offered* in the Fulneſs of Time ; or for ſeveral other Reaſons too long to be here inſiſted on: I ſay, that God could not be pleaſed with them for ſome of theſe or the like Reaſons, this I peremptorily deny ; and I ſhall leave it with our Author (who takes upon himſelf as if he was thoroughly acquainted with the Divine Nature) to ſhew that God's Acceptance of them, upon theſe or ſome other Accounts, is inconſiſtent with any of thoſe Attributes which are acknowledged to belong to Him ; or that Mankind's offering them, with thoſe or the like Views, was irreconcileable with natural Reaſon, or any of thoſe Relations wherein they ſtand to God, to other Men, or themſelves.

For what wiſe Reaſons God might chuſe this Method, of *giving up his own Son to be a Ranſom for all*, and accepting of *Him only* to be an Expiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, and *without his Blood to grant Man no Remiſſion*, as He has no where told me, ſo (I readily confeſs) I do not preſume to know ; but as He hath expreſly aſſured me, that He has done it, ſo I can readily believe it without being able to aſſign the particular Reaſons for it. There are many things done by our *earthly Governours*, which we *muſt believe* and know to be true, for which yet we are not able to *aſſign any proper Reaſon* ; but the Prince and thoſe who are immediately employed under him (we think it but Modeſty to ſuppoſe) can :

can : And ſurely it is as reaſonable and fitting for us to ſuppoſe, that the Governour of the Univerſe may have great and weighty Reaſons for his Methods of Proceedings, though we, who are at a Diſtance and do not attend about his Throne, may not be able to account for them : And the contrary Practice ſeems to proceed from a ſort of Vanity, of affecting to have it thought *that we are of the Privy-Council of Heaven*, and conſequently that if ſuch or ſuch a thing had been done there, we muſt needs have known it, and been let into the ſecret Reaſons for which it was done.

As to his Objection againſt applying to God by an *Advocate or Interceſſor*, it is ſo very trifling as hardly to deſerve that any Notice ſhould be taken of it. His Argument, if it proves any thing at all, proves a great *deal more* (I will not ſay *than what was intended by the Author*, but a great *deal more)* than it appears by him to have been produced to prove : For when Men apply themſelves to God *immediately in their own Perſons*, or *in the collective Body of a Congregation*, for the Relief of their Wants, or the Pardon of their Offences; when they *pour out their Complaints* (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) *before Him, and tell Him of their Troubles* ; does not this as much ſuppoſe Him to be *ignorant* or *weak*, or *not ready and willing* of Himſelf to relieve them, as when they do the ſame Things by the *Interpoſal of another ?* If *this* therefore be a ſufficient Reaſon for Mens not applying to the Divine Majeſty *by an Interceſſor*, it is as much a Reaſon why they ſhould make *no Prayers or Supplications at all to Him*, either publick or private ; but ſhould leave God to Himſelf to do as he thinks fit, for fear leaſt they ſhould reflect on Him either as *not knowing their Wants*, or elſe *not willing and good-natured enough* to relieve them ; or ſo *weak*, as to be prevailed upon by Mens Cries and Importunities to do otherwiſe than what He originally intended. Whether this Author intended his Argument to be carried thus far or not, I can not determine ; but from the Practices and Declarations of ſome who affect to be called Men of *free-thinking*, I am apt to believe he did : For though he tells us himſelf in another Place, *That it is the Voice of Nature that God ſhould be publickly worſhipped* ; yet (as he beſt knows whether he duly attends that publick Worſhip or not ; ſo) ſome of his Abettors both ſpeak and act otherwiſe, and can by no Means approve of what they call (in their ingenious way of expreſſing themſelves) *the ſerving of God in Crowds*. Pag. 116.

However, when I ſee him, or any of his Diſciples, upon the want of any good Place, or fear of any Puniſhment, refuſing to apply by *proper Perſons* to his Majeſty, for the obtaining of the one,

or eſcaping of the other, for this *weighty Reaſon*, Leaſt they ſhould reflect upon *his Knowledge, or Wiſdom, or Goodneſs of Nature, if they do not leave him wholly to himſelf, and the free Uſe of his own Benevolence* ; I will promiſe to begin to think there is ſomething in this Argument ; but till that Time I muſt beg leave to be of Opinion, and to tell theſe Gentlemen, that Prayers, and Supplications, and Cryings to God, whether publick or private, whether by ourſelves or by a Mediator, are *not intended to ſuggeſt* to Him any thing that He does not know, nor *to win upon His Weakneſs* by our Complaints or Importunities, nor denote or ſuppoſe *any Want of Goodneſs in Him* (as this Author would have us imagine ;) but are ſo many ſolemn Declarations and Acknowledgements of our *own continual Needs and Neceſſities*, of our Weakneſs and Inability to help and relieve ourſelves ; for which Reaſon we apply ourſelves in the beſt Manner that we can, and (as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it) *get us to the Lord right humbly*, as an Acknowledgment on our Part of *His* being every where preſent to hear our Prayers, and always able and willing to relieve our Wants ; and of *our* entire Dependance upon Him and Him alone for ſuch Relief ; and ſo they are proper Acts whereby to expreſs *our Humility and Submiſſion* to Almighty God, and to ſet forth *His Honour and Glory*, which by the Law of *Nature and Reaſon itſelf*, as well as by the Tenour of the *Chriſtian Covenant*, conſidered as *Creatures* we are obliged to do to our *infinitely holy and good Creator*.

Thus have I gone through what I propoſed in this Diſcourſe, and have endeavoured to explain and eſtabliſh the Doctrine contained in the Words of my Text ; and to anſwer the Cavils and Objections that have been brought againſt it, particularly by a late Writer, who has rendered himſelf conſiderable enough to be publickly taken Notice of, for no other Reaſon that I am able to imagine, but for his more than ordinary *Malice* againſt the Chriſtian Religion, and ſome *little Arts* of Diſſimulation and Diſguiſe, and giving a *plauſible Turn* by ſome Words and Phraſes to his falſe Reaſonings, and thereby being qualified to lead Captive ſome ſilly People, who either *cannot*, or *have not a Mind* to ſee through his wicked Devices. I ſhall conclude all at preſent with a brief Exhortation to the younger Part of the Audience, *That they would* ſtudiouſly endeavour (which is one great Part of the Deſign of their being *here*) to make themſelves Maſters of the Art of *clear Thinking and ſolid Reaſoning*, that they may walk ſecurely themſelves, and ſerve as Guides to others, (if Providence ſhould call them to that Office) in the Midſt of *a crooked and perverſe Generation* in which they live ;

that

that they may be able to discover the empty Fallacies, and captious Artifices of some wicked and ungodly Men, whom in the present *Licentiousness of Thinking, Talking, Printing, and Dispersing Books*, they may probably be too often encountered with in this World: *That they would not* however be too confident of their own Judgments, nor lean too much to their own Understandings; but advise with (especially in Matters of great Importance) and be directed by Men of maturer Age and greater Experience in the World, before they entirely give up their Assent: And above all, That by serious and earnest Prayer they would acknowledge their own Insufficiency, and call in the Aids and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, to guide and direct them into the Knowledge of His Truth; that so they may *not be as Children*, (to use the Apostle's Words) *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Slight of Men and cunning Craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive*; but *may grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Salvation purchased by Him, till they come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect Man, to the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ*; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, *&c.*

FINIS.

FINIS.